THE BOOKMAN

JUNE 1929

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Book-of-the-Month Club NEWS

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The Editorial Board of the Book-of-the-Month Club consists of:

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HERE are some interesting and pertinent data for the intelligent book-reader, who for one reason or another finds he does not read as many of the new books as he would like to. It is a list of the books the judges of the Book-of-the-Month Club have chosen as the "book-of-the-month," in addition to those recommended, in the last three years. Here they are, going backward from June, 1929.

ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT	Remarque
A PREFACE TO MORALS	Walter Lippmann
HENRY THE EIGHTH	Francis Hackett
CRADLE OF THE DEEP	Joan Lowell
KRISTIN LAVRANSDATTER	Sigrid Undset
JOSEPH & HIS BRETHREN	H. W. Freeman
THE CASE OF SERGEANT GRISCHA	Arnold Zweig
WHITHER MANKIND	Charles Beard
HUNGER FIGHTERS	Paul de Kruif
THE CHILDREN	Edith Wharton
JOHN BROWN'S BODY	Stephen Vincent Benet
BAMBI	Felix Salten
THE INTELLIGENT WOMAN'S GUIDE TO SOCIALISM AND CAPITALISM	George Bernard Shaw
THE CLOSED GARDEN	Julian Green
THE HOTEL	Elizabeth Bowen
DELUGE	S. Fowler Wright
DISRAELI	Andre Maurois
CLAIRE AMBLER	Booth Tarkington
ABRAHAM LINCOLN	Carl Sandburg
RED SKY AT MORNING	Margaret Kennedy
RIGHT OFF THE MAP	C. E. Montague
DUSTY ANSWER	Rosamond Lehmann
MEANWHILE	H. G. Wells
YOUR MONEY'S WORTH	Chase & Schlink
GIANTS IN THE EARTH	O. E. Rolvaag
MARCHING ON	James Boyd
REVOLT IN THE DESERT	T. E. Lawrence
ELMER GANTRY	Sinclair Lewis
NAPOLEON	Emil Ludwig
HEART OF EMERSON'S JOURNALS	Ed. by Bliss Perry
THE ORPHAN ANGEL	Elinor Wylie
THE ROMANTIC COMEDIANS	Ellen Glasgow
THE TIME OF MAN	Eliza M. Roberts
SHOW BOAT	Edna Ferber
THE SILVER SPOON	John Galsworthy
THE SAGA OF BILLY THE KID	W. N. Burns
O GENTEEL LADY	Esther Forbes
TEEFTALLOW	T. S. Stribling
LOLLY WILLOWES	Sylvia Townsend Warner

In addition to this list, *between six and seven hundred books* during the last three years have been reported upon and recommended by our judges. Our subscribers did not have to take any one of the books above, but could have taken one of these alternates. One-third of our subscribers —*thirty-five thousand every month*—either do this, or avail themselves of the privilege of taking no book at all, when none of those reported upon appeals to them.

It should be remembered, also, that sometimes a worthy book has not been chosen in a particular month, but could only be strongly recommended as an alternate because our five judges felt that there was some other *more* worthy book, in their opinion, which should be chosen.

This list, we believe, is one to be proud of. Our judges are human. They have made some mistakes in their choices; and know it. But, on the whole, we feel their record is a remarkable one—and completely refutes the few critics who have been absurdly barking at them, for the last three years, on the ground that they are popularizing "cheap" books, with no literary merit. And when it is remembered that 35,000 of our subscribers every month either take one of the alternate books reported upon, or none at all,—the further criticism that they are "standardizing" reading, and leading our subscribers by the nose, also shows up, clearly, for the kind of twaddle that it is.

One of the leading publishers in the United States tells everybody who asks him that, since the Book-of-the-Month Club started, it is far easier for publishers and booksellers to sell worthy books than before. In other words, one clear effect of this new development in the book world is *that the standard of best sellers has been raised!* We believe many publishers would agree with this.

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NOTES ON NEW BOOKS

Philosophy and Psychology

AN OUTLINE OF ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY *edited by Gardner Murphy* (MODERN LIBRARY. $.95)

THE reader in psychology will find this little volume interesting on two counts: first, because it is not, as have been most, if not all of the Modern Library releases, a reprint of higher priced volumes, but an original compilation; second, because it is an excellent discussion of abnormal psychology. In addition to an unusually complete introduction by its editor, the book presents clearly written papers on feeble-mindedness, insanity, hysteria and other "twists in personality", suggestion, abnormal trends in childhood and the social factors involved in the treatment of mental abnormality. The list of contributors is imposing. It includes Tredgold, Goddard, Bernard Hart, the Hollinsworths, Morton and W. F. Prince, Healy and Bronner and many others.

THE CASE OF MISS R *by Alfred Adler* (GREENBERG. $3.50)

TAKING a "fragment of a life story" written by a young lady whom he had never seen, Dr. Adler presents, in a quasi-clinical manner, an analysis of her neurosis, just as he would perform one for a patient in his office. The story illustrates excellently the tendency of neurotics to attach their conflicts to many factors, maintaining in each manifestation the basic form of the compulsion. Miss R. centers her own neurosis about such diverse things as that rare skin disease, lupus, which she encounters in another person; the breaking of mirrors; riding on certain street-car lines; sleeping in certain positions, etc. Dr. Adler's analytic technique is adequately set forth in interpolations between excerpts from the girl's own story. From them will be gained a clear impression of Dr. Adler's position with reference to the interpretation of dreams, his conception of the rôle of the libido and his attitude on many Freudian concepts.

EXPERIENCE AND NATURE *by John Dewey* (NORTON. $3.00)

IN this new edition of Professor Dewey's book, the reader will find a new preface, outlining the thought behind the volume. The first chapter of this edition has been revised; its emphasis is placed, now, upon the philosophic method employed in the book, which the author, in one instance, labels "supra-empirical". Chapter II is the actual starting point of discussion. Except for a few minor changes in the text, the chapters which follow are the same as the original edition.

The Social Sciences

PICK UP THE PIECES *by North 3-1.* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $3.00)

AN anonymous author, adopting as his pseudonym the number of the state hospital ward in which he was confined at the time of his writing, relates his experiences in both public and private institutions for the care of the mentally afflicted. Shattered by his addiction to alcohol, he is taken for examination to a doctor who recommends that he recuperate in a private sanitarium in which the doctor owns an interest. There the nerve-racked author meets for the first time a régime of brutality and terror; the straitjacket in which he is confined paralyzes his hands and leaves lasting scars. He effects an escape and returns to his wife, who recommends his submission to treatment in a state hospital. In this institution (for the insane) he spends many months, writing about the inmates, the attendants, their maladies and their lives. For all its rambling, for all its lack of organization, his story is vivid, at times revolting in its frankness, always engrossing. A preface and an afterword

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reveal that the author has reclaimed his life. The tale omits a complete account of his regeneration, which would make interesting reading.

POLITICS AND CRIMINAL PROSECUTION *by Raymond Moley* (MINTON, BALCH. $2.50)

PROFESSOR MOLEY'S work strikes a brisk pace from the starting gun—that sudden rat-tat-tat which mowed down District Attorney McSwiggin in Cicero some time ago. The author swings about the country, indicating the symptoms of the aggravated connection between the criminal prosecutor's office and the criminal. He affords the reader an excellent perspective of the methods of criminal prosecution current in this country, in Canada and in England. He discusses the twin functions of the prosecutor—conducting criminal investigations and preparing cases for trial. He reveals the pressure frequently brought to bear upon the prosecutor by political associates and business interests. The book discusses bravely the practice of bargaining in pleas, satirized in a quotation by Frank Sullivan. This practice, the author believes, is slowly rendering trial by jury obsolescent.

In his final chapter, Professor Moley offers some reflections on reform, which suggest the assumption of criminal prosecution by a central state authority or by the police—the present tendency in England.

RACE ATTITUDES IN CHILDREN *by Bruno Lasker* (HENRY HOLT. $4.00)

SPONSORED by a group of social research men who have adopted the name of "The Inquiry", this survey of race attitudes among children presents the nature and origin of such attitudes and the problems which grow out of them. Mr. Lasker has set down not only the forms of expression which children use to indicate their reaction to differing individuals, but the motives which prompt them, which range from a preadolescent desire to anger a playmate or to show contempt, all the way to mature resentment of success. Hostility may rest upon a fear of those characteristics which set the group apart from one's own race. Color, custom and religion are mentioned.

Important factors which develop racial animosities in children are their absorption of adult attitudes, institutional influences (such as segregation in theatres, restaurants and schools), formal teaching and naïve learning at school, and contacts in the recreational activities of children. In combating these factors, home and school, church and community must co-operate.

THE FOUR FACES OF SIVA *by Robert J. Casey* (BOBBS-MERRILL. $5.00)

"THE Detective Story of a Vanished Race", Mr. Casey calls his book; and an engrossing tale it is, though without a final solution. It is an account of the deserted cities of Angkor Vat and Angkor Thom, buried for centuries in the jungles of Cochin-China. Mr. Casey presents vividly the awe-inspiring beauty of these monuments to an extinct civilization; he writes with wit and restraint about the theories advanced to explain the annihilation of a highly intellectual race, which apparently walked out of its beautiful city and was lost to the world. Conquest, famine, plague and pestilence; migration and enslavement—all are considered as possible explanations of the Great Mystery. All are refuted on the basis of sound evidence. Who the Khmers were, where they came from, what happened to them, are questions which even myth and legend fail to answer. And some of the Cambodian legends are delicately told by the author. The story of Mr. Casey's journey, the illustrations of the Seven-Headed Cobra, of the Leper King, of the Four Faces of Siva; the recurrence of fascinating names such as Pnom Penh, Tonle Sap, Neak Pean, Pra Khan; the fearsome conversation of Yin, the author's chauffeur—these bring the Orient right into the reader's room.

TRAINING CHILDREN *by William H. Pyle* (CENTURY. $2.25)

DR. PYLE places the responsibility for the development of any child's personality squarely upon its parents. He points out that the child's character is being built from the first by the interplay of environment and its original nature. Instead of allowing chance to be the deciding factor, parents should control the building process, so that the finished structure shall be worth

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Author of *Typee, Omoo, Moby Dick,* etc.

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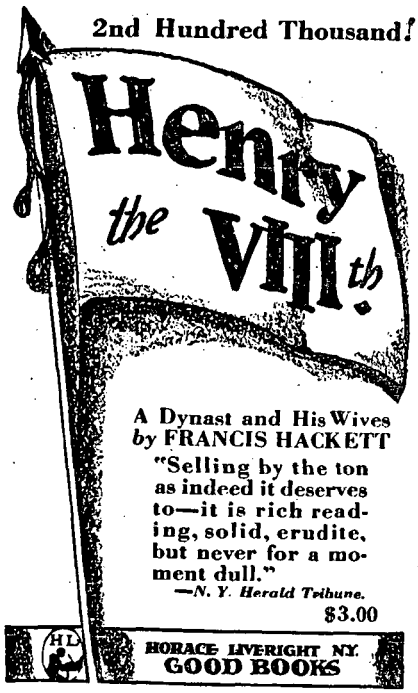

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while. Dr. Pyle discusses the inborn traits of the child, including several, such as imitation, acquisitiveness, fear of certain objects, which are matters of considerable discussion among psychologists today. He presents a rather good account of the rôle of play in the socialization of the child and of the influence of social contacts on habit formation. In his chapter on habits, the author includes an interesting score card. The second half of the book is a categorical presentation of typical child behavior-problems and instructions for solving them. In spite of the generality of Dr. Pyle's recommendations, *Training Children* should stimulate parents to give a little more thought to the rearing of their offspring.

MAN AND CIVILIZATION *by John Storck* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $2.75)

A COMPACT and comprehensive account of the contributions to contemporary life made by the arts and sciences. Drawing upon biology, psychology, anthropology and sociology, with complete realization of the infancy of these disciplines, Professor Storck pictures for us the stages in the development of man. He outlines the unfolding of the personality, the growing adeptness of the individual in conforming to western civilization, his mastery of its tools and machines, his facility in the use of language. He discusses contemporary economic life, emphasizing the indispensability and inevitability of the machine, the growth of the functional attitude as opposed to the old doctrine of rights and the professionalization of industry. He examines the family in its changing aspects and analyzes work, play and the arts to determine the nature of enjoyment in life. He devotes a chapter each to the place of science in the promotion of civilization and to the rôle of religion in the development of mortality. The book is written in the style of a dynamic, well-informed lecturer.

IF PARENTS ONLY KNEW *by Elizabeth Cleveland* (NORTON. $1.75)

THE late Miss Cleveland presents, in this posthumously published volume, a simple account of the activities to be found in a modern school. By "modern school" Miss Cleveland does not mean any school of today, but rather the progres-

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sive, experimentally inclined institution, which is to be found with increasing frequency in our country. The author has organized her discussion around the seven objectives of education outlined and adopted by the National Education Association. They are command of the fundamental tools and processes (the three *R's*), health, worthy home membership, vocation, recreation, citizenship and character. In its attempts to realize these objectives, the modern school treats the child as a growing personality and not as just another pupil at whom to teach. Throughout her book, Miss Cleveland has emphasized the interrelation of home, child and school. An appreciation of the author by Professor Helen Wooley of Columbia has been added to the original text. The book is published by the Norton firm in association with *Children, The Parents' Magazine.*

OUR CHANGING CIVILIZATION *by John Herman Randall, Jr.* (STOKES. $3.00)

How do civilizations change? What is causing ours to change? What is the nature of change in our civilization? What will be the immediate result of such change? Civilizations change, according to Professor Randall, when innovation, in conflict with the old, slowly brings about new conditions, new habits of action as well as thought, new techniques of living. Gradually, the strength of the new overcomes the cultural inertia which has preserved the old; new ideals replace old traditions. In recent times, the advent of business and science has brought an attempt at readjustment, which occurred in the Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Centuries. The coming of the machine and advances in science intensified and prolonged the period of adjustment, which is still with us. It has brought about an urbanization of our culture as well as of our population. It has developed the laboratory to the point where it threatens to supplant religion in the determination of moral standards. Professor Randall believes that science will not be the means of escape from the struggle which our period of transition promises to sponsor, nor will a flight to beauty and the arts help. Rather will a complete faith in the nature of industrialism eventually lead us to live willingly and intelligently in our new, ever-changing world.

IT'S NOT OUR FAULT *by Alfred Lawrence Hall-Quest* (LIVERIGHT. $2.50)

THIS outline of sin explains the roots of all evil and the nature of virtue, from prehistoric mistiness to the present day. All peoples, says the author, have misbehaved; the prehistoric, the Cro-Magnon, the Hun, the American Indian, Babylon, Athens, Alexandria, Carthage, Rome—yes, London and New York—all have sinned, and in the same manner. Their sins have been variously interpreted. The priests have called sin the activity of evil spirits or the deed of the unbeliever. The philosophers have defined it as the indulgence of self in preference to serving the universal good, the universal reason, the universal *ought*. The law has attempted to curb sin—and, in the attempt, to define it—by imposing restrictions and prohibitions upon man's "natural" tendencies. Social Science labels sin as conflict between the individual and society; viewed by psychology, sin becomes a distorted response to multiple stimuli, a behavior pattern stamped with the disapproval of a society which regards human nature as "a composition of rebellion against God". The problem of sinning will be solved, says Dr. Hall-Quest, only through adequate education.

THE AMERICAN NEGRO. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science.* Vol. CXXXXX. No. 229 *edited by Donald Young.*

THE growing number of books dealing with the man of color has directed the attention of the lay reader toward this compilation, by social scientists, of material dealing with the Negro and his place in American life. Among the contributors are Park and Burgess of Chicago, DuBois of the *Crisis,* Dublin of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, Johnson and Seligmann of the N. A. A. C. P., Moton of Tuskegee, Viteles and Nathanson of the University of Pennsylvania, and Payne of N. Y. U. They have amassed a wealth of data on the basis and nature of race attitudes; on Negro health and disease; on Negro criminality; on Negro achievement in art, music, literature, business, science and in the professions. Among their papers are interesting discussions of the colored man's recreations, his church activities, his mental capacities,

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(with emphasis on the lack of evidence which has invalidated many so-called "scientific" attempts to prove his inferiority to whites,) and his status in Latin America and Europe. There is a descriptive bibliography and a complete index.

BLACK AMERICA *by Scott Nearing* (VANGUARD PRESS. $3.00)

THE lot of the Negro in the United States is described by Mr. Nearing, with statistical, economic and historical material. The reader is taken from the beginnings of slave dealing, promoted in the Seventeenth Century to supply the labor needed in the Colonies, to the present day. He is shown through the author's eyes, the frustrated attempts of the Negro to acquire land in the South, the squalor and inadequate living conditions to which an absurdly low wage dooms him, the eternal segregation which is only a symptom of the oppression that keeps the Negro from white-collar jobs and the professions.

Organizations to promote the welfare of the race and its own press are doing much to complete the process of true emancipation. Negroes prominent in science, business, letters and the arts are helping, indirectly and directly, the black man to his place in the sun.

Biography

PEOPLE *by Edgar Wallace* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.00)

A PERSONAL history of the most famous English mystery writer of the day. More than a mere description of events, it is a romantic tale of people and places, ambitions and misadventures. His early experiences of travel and adventures as a reporter and war correspondent are reflected in his mystery yarns, and it is small wonder that he has been able to find enough themes for his ever fertile pen.

Miscellaneous

THE FALL OF HOSEIN THE HOLY *edited by Eustace Conway* (RUDGE. $3.00)

A DELIGHTFUL Oriental version of temptation in the wilderness, written by an unknown author, forms the title-piece for this little volume. The style of the legend, with its amusing ending, is pleasing. Four essays by Mr. Conway follow; one, on "Old Letters", contains much of interest about the property rights of letters and manuscripts. The essay's claim to publication, as Mr. Conway states in a Foreword, arises from his commendable desire to rescue the story, found in his father's library, from oblivion. The story alone is worthy of the setting which, needless to say, William Edwin Rudge has given it.

BANDITS AND THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC *by C. B. Glasscock* (STOKES. $2.50)

IN its course through California the Southern Pacific had taken land from the homesteaders. Failing to get relief from the Government in Washington some of the settlers banded together, fiercely resisting the onward progress of the Iron Horse. This book concerns itself largely with the depredations of the two most famous bandits—John Sontag and his partner Chris Evans. Both sides are dealt with fairly in this impartial and graphic narrative.

THE ELIZABETHAN JIG *by Charles Read Baskervill* (UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO. $5.00)

BY the middle of the Sixteenth Century popular dance-songs called "jigs" were common in England; by the 'nineties a specialized stage jig was rapidly developing; usually as an afterpiece to serious plays. It probably took its name from the dance which commonly accompanied it. The folk jig was commonly a satirical libel or a rustic or pastoral love-lyric or dialogue; the stage jig became a farce, reflecting "the realistic—the coarse, odd and comic—aspects of life, with a touch of burlesque". It was the pet of the pit before Elizabeth's death; it invaded the Continent with such success that more actual examples now exist in foreign languages than in English. In it Elizabethan license apparently touched a peak. By 1616 it had become prohibited in London; revived thereafter, it was not the same thing. So much of the original material is lost that to study it the indirect approach was necessary; a terrific task. Nothing daunted, Mr. Baskervill has plunged in, and, in 600 pages, has filled a lacuna in English folk-song and dramatic history.

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OUR FACE FROM FISH TO MAN *by William K. Gregory.* (PUTNAM. $4.50)

CONSIDERABLE pleasure and profit are in this well-written account of the evolution of man. Professor Gregory's work points out the similarities between the features of the modern man and those of the anthropoids, the present-day survivors of Eocene primates, the fossils of prehistoric man and the lower forms of life through the ages. More than one hundred illustrations emphasize these similarities. The author considers in some detail not only head shapes and skull formations but also lips, teeth, tongue, eyes, ears and nose. His presentation includes a discussion of foetal development as well as an analysis of the factors influencing individual differences among the races of the earth. A bibliography of more than two hundred authoritative sources which Professor Gregory consulted and an excellent index add to the value of the book.

LION *by Martin Johnson* (PUTNAM. $5.00)

IN *Safari* Martin Johnson touched on lions, but he dealt in the main with elephants. In this new book he goes thoroughly into the life, habits, likes and dislikes of the king of the beasts, in some cases venturing almost within touching distance to photograph him. The book is profusely and interestingly illustrated.

WHO'S WHO AMONG THE MICROBES *by William H. Park and Anna W. Williams* (CENTURY. $3.00)

MICROBES, hunted and scrutinized, swarm through the pages of this clearly written volume. Here, probably, is the only instance in which contact with them will be profitable to the reader. The authors have compiled a brief account of how and by whom microbes were first discovered. They have described the manner in which these microscopic organisms are studied in laboratories. They have indicated in a very readable, non-technical manner, how microbes are classified and how they work. He comes to know how they live, what they do and what he can do about them. He learns of the rôle played by these tiny creatures in epidemics, infection and fermentation. Before he has finished the volume, the reader has been warned against those microbes which have thus far eluded their hunters and go doggedly about their nefarious business. The book is well illustrated.

THE OUTLINE OF BUNK *by E. Haldeman-Julius* (STRATFORD. $4.00)

THE publisher of those little blue books has written a volume of 496 pages exposing the ramifications of bunk in our day and age and outlining the manifest duty of the de-bunker. Bunk, he says, is quackery, false reasoning, contrariness to fact, shoddy thinking—in short, the "lowest form of human expression". Bunk is present in our history, our religion, our morals and traditions; it flourishes in our schools, the press, politics and literature. In fact, we are all bunk shooters and bunk victims; hence, fair game for the de-bunker, whose mission is "to liberate and enlighten mankind and to bring greater happiness into man's life".

"SOUND OFF" *by Edward Arthur Dolph* (COSMOPOLITAN. $7.50)

UNQUESTIONABLY the most inclusive and useful collection of American soldier-songs; it is easier to object to the presence of some, which could be included only after ruinous bowdlerization, than to cite important omissions. There are well-filled sections on the songs of and before the Revolution, the interim through 1812, the Mexican, Spanish and World Wars; one will find the time-honored doggerels to the bugle calls, two examples of the rogues' marches and a remarkable fife-and-drum piece which was played at André's execution; will learn that Madelon was the soldiers' sweetheart by 1812, and will note the striking influence of Kipling on soldier bards of 1898. The illustrations by Lawrence Schick are good. The songs are well and simply set by Philip Egner, the editor has been to great pains to search out the original tunes, there are good notes, indices, and a bibliography.

THE DIARY OF A COMMUNIST UNDERGRADUATE *by N. Ogynyov* (PAYSON & CLARKE. $2.50)

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(CONTINUED ON PAGE XX)

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THE BOOKMAN

Edited by Seward Collins

JUNE, 1929 VOL. LXIX; NO. 4

THE TALES DEAD MEN TELL

A BIOGRAPHER'S DIFFICULTIES IN WEIGHING HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

by André Maurois

No two views of history could be more different than those of Froude and of Mr. Nicolson. Froude does not believe in historical truth. He quotes Talleyrand's remark with approval: "There is nothing which can so easily be arranged as facts", and says himself, "The most perfect history of England is to be found, in my opinion, in Shakespeare's historical plays". In another passage he imagines himself being arraigned in company with other historians, before a tribunal for the examination of his work; the judges have a magical liquid which has the power of obliterating everything that is false in his books; page after page, chapter after chapter disappears, leaving just a judgment here and there and generally one which he formed with the least care, one which his critics had most violently attacked.

But Harold Nicolson courageously takes a stand in opposition to Froude:

> I would suggest, in the first place, that the scientific interest in biography is hostile to, and will in the end prove destructive of, the literary interest. The former will insist not only on the facts, but on all the facts. The scientific interest, as it develops, will become insatiable; no synthetic power, no genius for representation, will be able to keep the pace. I foresee, therefore, a divergence between the two interests. Scientific biography will become specialised and technical. There will be biographies in which development will be traced in all its intricacy and in a manner comprehensible only to the experts; there will be biographies examining the influence of heredity —biographies founded on Galton, on Lombroso, on Havelock Ellis, on Freud; there will be medical biographies—studies of the influence on character of the endocrine glands, studies of internal secretions; there will be sociological biographies, aesthetic biographies, philosophical biographies. These will doubtless be interesting and instructive, but the emphasis which will be thrown on the analytical or scientific aspect will inevitably lessen the literary effort applied to their composition. The more that biography becomes a branch of science, the less will it become a branch of literature.

Our question today is this: Is there, in biography, a scientific truth? And it seems to me that the question naturally divides itself into two: first, is it possible to know the truth

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about a man? secondly, to what extent can we discover the truth about a time, or a period, in recording the history of a man?

What material is at our disposal for the discovery of the truth about a man? First of all, there are the works of those who have previously written about him. These, of course, must be read with great care but, whenever they are accessible, we must turn preferably to original documents. Nothing is an adequate substitute for the personal impression to be obtained from direct contact with a man's letters or diary. At the hands of those who have already used them they have undergone a change. It is the same in actual life: we meet ten witnesses who give their description of some particular man; each of them has his own opinion about him; those who have never seen him have invented a legend about him; those who have met him remember nothing but an anecdote and how the man looked for a particular moment—an appearance which they identify with the whole man. When we afterwards find ourselves face to face with the real man, when we discover the man himself, we are completely astonished to see how little the real Poincaré, for instance, resembles the Poincaré of legend. We expected a lawyer's face, severe, geometrical; instead, we find gentle eyes and an almost ingenuous expression.

The same applies to the past. Here contact is possible only through the medium of the written word and it is, in consequence, imperfect. Nevertheless, the actual words written by the man himself have a particular tone, a particular shade of significance which no paraphrase can preserve. I remember my surprise when I read Byron's Ravenna journal for the first time. There I grasped what no biography had made me see before—Byron in front of his fire:

> Stayed at home all the morning—looked at the fire—wondered when the post would come. . . . Wrote five letters in about half an hour, short and savage. . . . Hear the carriage—order pistols and great coat, as usual—necessary articles. Weather cold—carriage open, and inhabitants somewhat savage— . . . highly inflamed by politics. Fine fellows though, good materials for a nation. . . . Clock strikes—going out to make love. Somewhat perilous, but not disagreeable.
>
> Thought of the state of women under the ancient Greeks—convenient enough. Present state a remnant of the barbarism of the chivalry and feudal ages—artificial and unnatural. They ought to mind home—and be well fed and clothed—but not mixed in society. Well educated, too, in religion—but to read neither poetry nor politics—nothing but books of piety and cookery. Music, drawing, dancing—also a little gardening and ploughing now and then. I have seen them mending the roads in Epirus with great success. Why not, as well as hay-making and milking?
>
> Came home . . . and played with my mastiff,—gave him his supper. . . . The crow is lame of a leg—wonder how it happened—some fool trod upon his toe, I suppose. The falcon pretty brisk—the cats large and noisy,—the monkeys I have not looked to since the cold weather, as they suffer by being brought up. Horses must be gay—get a ride as soon as weather serves. Deuced muggy still—an Italian winter is a sad thing, but all the other seasons are charming.
>
> What is the reason that I have been, all my lifetime, more or less *ennuyé?* And that, if anything, I am rather less so now than I was at twenty, so far as my recollection serves? I do not know how to answer this, but presume that it is constitutional. . . . Temperance and exercise, which I have practised at times . . . made little or no difference. Violent passions did;—when under their immediate influence—it is odd, but—I was in agitated, but not in depressed, spirits. . . . Swimming also raises my spirits, but in general they are low and get daily lower. That is *hopeless;* for I do not think that I am so much *ennuyé* as I was at nineteen. The proof is, that then I must game, or drink, or be in motion of some kind, or I was miserable. At present I can mope in quietness.

I would willingly give the lives of Byron by Moore and Elze and Edgecumbe and all the rest, even Trelawny, for a few such pages of the diary.

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Yes, this particular note given forth by every human soul, whose pure echo is so delightful to the ear, comes from original documents and it is useless to seek for it anywhere else. But to what degree do these original documents themselves convey the truth to us? Few such documents are generally available; not many men keep a diary and most modern men write but few letters. Of those who have kept a diary, it is a rare thing to find one who has kept it all his life. The diary stands for exceptional moments in a life and we shall be sorely tempted to see in it a representation of the whole of a life. Such a view is all the more misleading when the notion of keeping a diary has occurred only at times of crisis, with the result that we neglect the normal and habitual aspect of our subject.

But further, even if we confine our attention to those periods for which we have a diary, how are we to be sure that the diary exactly represented the mind of the man who wrote it? Certain diaries are written with an eye to posterity; the author adopts a definite attitude in his writing, and complacently anticipates the effect which his attitude will produce upon the reader. Even when the diary is honestly not intended to be read, the writer is very often posing to himself. He has visualized a certain attitude, he finds it pleasing, and he experiences an esthetic pleasure in exaggerating it. Every memorialist is an author, whether he wishes it or not; the *ego* which he has established on his writing paper becomes a separate entity; he contemplates it at a distance, sometimes with horror, sometimes with admiration, but in both cases with an esthetic detachment which gives many diaries a high literary value, but at the same time completely destroys their value as psychological documents. The most favorable instance is that of a man like Pepys, who is primarily a recorder of facts and is not a victim of the modern curse of introspection. Of course, a clever psychologist can extract some profit even from a diary which is falsified for the reasons we have just given by interpreting it in the light of other documents; but it is a very delicate task which depends upon a sense of artistic perception much more than upon scientific method.

I should say much the same about correspondence and about conversations reported by witnesses. Of course, they are all important documents, but here again only to be properly valued by being interpreted by a creative imagination. They are almost always contradictory; all men and women present very different appearances of themselves to other people. The Shelley who writes to Godwin is a different creature from the Shelley who writes to Miss Hitchener or to Hogg. The Byron who writes to Lady Melbourne is a cynic; the Byron who talks with Lady Blessington is almost a sentimentalist. It is true that the correspondence with Lady Melbourne does not belong to the same year as the conversations with Lady Blessington and, of course, time plays a part in this psychological change, but there is also a fact of more general significance and one with which we are all familiar; it is that, by an involuntary mimicry, we model ourselves upon what the other person expects of us. Byron writes on the fly-leaf of a copy of *Corinne* belonging to the Countess Guiccioli:

> I feel I exist here, and I feel that I shall exist hereafter—to *what* purpose you will decide; my destiny rests with you. . . . I love you and you love me,—at least you *say so,* and *act* as if you *did* so, which last is a great consolation in all events. But *I* more than love you and cannot cease to love you.

And in the same week, referring to Teresa Guiccioli, he writes to Hobhouse:

> I can't say I don't feel the degradation. Better be an unskilful planter, and awkward settler —better be a hunter, or anything, than a flatterer of fiddlers and fan-carrier of a woman. . . . And now I am a *cavalier servant*—by the Holy! it is a strange sensation.

Musset, the French counterpart of Byron,

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at the very time when he was writing to George Sand:

> Posterity will recall our names as those of such immortal lovers as have nothing in the world but each other, such lovers as Romeo and Juliet or Héloïse and Abélard. . . .

—was recording feelings which led him immediately afterwards to remark:

> While I was composing my poems, she was scribbling over reams of paper. . . . This tête-à-tête every day with a woman older than myself, a face growing always more and more serious in front of me—all this revolted the spirit of youth within me and filled me with bitter regret for my former liberty. . . .

In the volatile personality of a Byron or a Musset, such impressions are no doubt perfectly sincere and illustrate the varying moods of the men themselves. But, in other instances, a letter may be the work of a hypocrite and express nothing at all of the writer's true feelings. This is the case with the excellent Godwin: if we read Godwin's letters to Shelley, or his letters to Edward Bulwer Lytton, without connecting them with what we know of Godwin's life and habits, he appears to us as a saint—which is very far from the truth. Thus all these personal documents, precious though they may be, are valuable only in so far as they are put face to face with each other and with the complete picture of the man's personality. Such a process, when it is feasible, reveals to us weaknesses, falsehoods and mistakes and throws a marvellously bright light upon our hero; but, once again, it is the work of the artist rather than of the scholar.

When we are dealing with a writer, there is one extremely tempting document—his written work; and the first tendency of every biographer is to interpret the work in an autobiographical sense. It is quite natural. Obviously no writer knows any other soul so well as he knows his own; when he wants to portray men, he utilizes fragments of his own character. As Mr. E. M. Forster explains in *Aspects of Fiction,* the characters of a novel are masses of words which represent certain qualities of the author himself:

> The novelist, unlike many of his colleagues, makes up a number of word-masses roughly describing himself (roughly: niceties shall come later) gives them names and sex, assigns them plausible gestures, and causes them to speak by the use of inverted commas, and perhaps to behave consistently. These word-masses are his characters.

Thus it seems possible, and often easy, to discover the man underneath his characters. We may construct a Dickens according to *David Copperfield,* or a Meredith according to *Evan Harrington,* or a Stendhal according to Fabrice and Julien, or Balzac's childhood according to that of Felix de Vandenesse. This may have an air of truth, but it is extremely dangerous. Thomas Hardy, turning the pages of a book about himself, said to a visitor: Why are people not more careful in deducing biographical and semi-biographical facts from an author's books? People used to say that David Copperfield was Dickens. He was not. . . . Mr. Hedgcock is continually drawing on the novels for descriptions of my character. His dissection would not be in good taste while I am still alive, even if it were true. But it is based chiefly on characters and incidents in the novels that are pure invention. . . . Mr. Hedgcock's besetting fault of getting behind the novels of the writer leads to numerous inaccuracies. Thus he says that I was brought up to speak the local dialect. I did not speak it. I knew it, but it was not spoken at home. My mother only used it when speaking to the cottagers, and my father when speaking to his workmen. The account of my education is full of errors. It is stated that I was educated at an elementary school and was deprived of a classical training. I was only at an elementary school for a year or two, till I was ten, and I learnt Latin at school from my twelfth year. Again, he says I learnt the classics by correspondence—deluded by his false identification of me with Smith in *A Pair of Blue Eyes.* The same source of error leads to the ascription to myself of the disgust felt for architecture by a character in *Desperate Remedies.* . . . When he comes to Smith, he makes some of his worst mistakes—one unwarranted assumption after an-

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other. The description of his appearance is not at all like what I was. His father was not at all like mine. He was a Cornishman and a journeyman. Smith himself was a Weymouth man—as far as he was based on any real person, which he was not much. On one page he identifies me with Springrove, and another with Clym. . . .

Anyone who has written a novel himself will well understand Thomas Hardy. A character in a novel is built up not of the whole of the author's personality, but often of a very tiny fragment of his *ego*. From the fact that Proust has written some admirable pages on jealousy, I should hesitate to infer that Proust was a jealous man, especially towards the end of his life. To have experienced an emotion strongly for a few days, or even a few minutes, is quite enough to enable a man to describe it. Often the mere description is enough to prevent his feeling it again; in such a case the man's work is a means of deliverance. Possibly—I know nothing of this; it is pure hypothesis—possibly it might be true to say: Meredith pilloried the egoist, because he was himself an egoist and Meredith ceased to be an egoist because he has written *The Egoist*.

Furthermore, in creating a character in a novel an author does not concentrate his attention upon himself and find everything there that he wants; a novelist is a man who knows something of others, who finds his way about the world. Even if he has discovered his hero's first pattern in himself, he finds in others a countless number of qualities which will feed and vitalize this central character. If we biographers accept this central character as the exact representation of the author, we shall expose ourselves to serious error.

Further, it often happens that a writer constructs his work in order to gain for himself, in a world of the imagination, what actual life has denied him—Dickens, for example, in the marriage of David and Agnes. In this case the novel is not autobiographical; it is exactly the reverse and it is only by quite an indirect approach that we can utilize it as documentary material. What happens in fact is that an author moulds his work less than the work moulds him; and, in a certain sense, he becomes its slave. The *Childe Harold* humor did exist for Byron, but it was a transient humor. Yet the public will not have it that its favorite author does not resemble his creation; it exerts a gentle, but powerful, pressure to force the author into the mould of the character he has created; and when the character is popular, alluring and attractive to women, the author gives way. The biographer must explain Byron by *Childe Harold* rather than *Childe Harold* by Byron.

French literary historians have recently had an excellent example of the errors into which they may be led by this method, even in what appeared to be the clearest case. Everyone believed that Balzac had been inspired to write *Le Lys dans la vallée* by his first mistress, Mme de Berny. A book recently published by M. Charles Léger, entitled *Balzac mis à nu,* has brought new documents to light and shows that Balzac's original in this particular story was the Countess Guidoboni-Visconti. At the very moment when Balzac was writing to a foreigner, Mme Hanska, "Oh, you don't know what three years of chastity means!" everyone in Paris knew about his liaison with Mme Guidoboni-Visconti, by whom he had a son in 1836.*

I believe, however (though I may be wrong), that there is one case in which there is no great danger in assuming that a work has been in large measure inspired by actual life—I mean when every one of an author's works contains the same character under a different name. In Stendhal's work it is very striking how Fabrice, Julien Sorel and Lucien Leuwen are exactly the same man—a man who is not what Stendhal was, but is very clearly what Stendhal would have liked to be. These characters have no autobiographical, but a considerable expository, value. It is the same when, in Disraeli's first two nov-

* This, too, will some day cease to be true.

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els, *Vivian Grey* and *Contarini Fleming,* we find in both heroes the same period of youth, the same school fight described in almost identical terms; here, I think (though I would shrink from dogmatizing) that we have a right to infer that we are dealing with a real obsession and that the narrative would not be so vivid if it were not real. I should say as much about the childhood of Dickens, and with still more confidence, for there we have the testimony of John Forster, who drew from Dickens an avowal of the autobiographical character of *David Copperfield,* whatever Thomas Hardy may say of it. We may add that we are certainly more justified in believing in the autobiographical quality of novels written in early youth than in that of novels written at a riper age. A young man of twenty has great difficulty in not writing of himself; even when he is writing a novel, he is a lyrical poet; in spite of himself his real sentiments burst out; the critical function which will come into active play in the matured writer and will hinder the expression of sentiments, on the ground that they will be considered ridiculous or dangerous or commonplace, is as yet absent from the young man's mind. But you see how few cases there are in which it is permissible to draw inferences from a man's work and even in such cases what serious errors such inferences may produce.

What is there still left that may be considered as an element in the discovery of truth? There is one document of high value—the memoirs of contemporaries. It is amongst them that we must hunt for those tiny, infinitely precious pictures which reveal to us what our hero was in the eyes of the man who actually met him. When the witness is intelligent, when he has the gift of sight, then he provides us with the most valuable form of document. Where shall we get a more revealing picture of Louis Philippe than in the short note made by Victor Hugo immediately after a visit he paid to the king? What better portrait of Disraeli in his old age could we have than that recorded after a visit to him by Mr. Hyndman in his *Record of an Adventurous Life?*

But here again we must weigh and compare impressions, since those received, by contemporaries, of the same man may be very different. Always we are driven back to the same idea: finding no one of the elements of a biographical truth to be strictly scientific, we are compelled to have recourse to a kind of psychological imaginativeness, and, in many instances, the truth about a particular event is impossible to determine. I will give you two examples. You know the story of the letter sent by Shelley to Byron to clear himself of the accusations of Elise, the chambermaid; you know that this letter, which was meant to be passed on to the Hoppners, was found amongst Byron's papers after his death. There are two possible solutions: (1) Byron never sent the letter, (2) Byron sent the letter which was returned to him by the Hoppners. On the first hypothesis, Byron behaved badly; on the second, he did precisely what he ought to have done. What is the truth? Pirandello alone could tell us: *Cosi e se vi pare.*

Here is another example of the same kind: the letter from Disraeli to Peel, which Disraeli denied in the House of Commons. Had he forgotten its existence at the time when he was speaking? In that case he is innocent. Had he not forgotten it? In that case he is not only a liar but a clumsy fool, since there was every reason to believe that Peel would have kept a letter of that kind. The truth is that the nearer we press towards actual facts, the more clearly we see that biography cannot be treated like physics and chemistry. In all the sciences of which the object is to investigate the relations between material substances experiment is possible, because we can control the experience; if we have not clearly observed what happens when sodium and water are brought together, we have simply to begin again and watch more closely the second time. But the proper function of biog-

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raphy is to deal with the individual and the instantaneous.

There was a minute, a second, at which Byron made up his mind about the letter for the Hoppners; at that moment he made a movement either of throwing it into a drawer, or of putting it into an envelope addressed to them. It was a moment which we can never recover, a unique experience which we can never behold again; hence the impossibility of our employing what is the essence of the scientific method.

"The historian's trade," writes Mme Pailleron, "is a terrible trade. How can one practise it with any security? In the first place, what do we know? Are you relying upon oral tradition? Who, amongst those that transmit it, is going to inspire you with confidence? Unless you are convinced of the soundness of their memories, of their impartiality and, I may add, of their lack of imagination, you are running great risks. Are you consulting other researchers? Mind you verify their texts. Are you using family papers, letters, documents which can scarcely be false? Are you building up your own opinion on the basis of them, are you taking sides? But see, some time afterwards there come other documents, containing fresh revelations. You thought your hero an honest man; so he was in his youth, but he ended at the galleys. You have described a man as a bronzed, upright figure and you find that he had a hump on his back. A faithful friend? You thought so. And so he was at the moment you chose to portray him; the next day, behold, he was a traitor. Your book crashes to the ground. You have assured your reader that such and such a man was faithful in love. Have you not held his letters in your hands? 'I am alone,' he wrote, 'I see no women, I live in a cell. What a gloomy life, what misery!' Nonsense! he suffers no misery, so far from his being alone, you shortly learn that he had become, at that hour precisely, the father of a fine boy . . . furthermore, that he corresponds with two ladies who, of their charity, pay visits to the hermit from time to time.

"Hence the discouragement of the historian, the uncertainty and disillusionment of the researcher, who cannot even place any confidence in death and say to himself: 'That man has lain in his grave for a century; I have no surprises to fear.' Yes, there are always surprises, as many in death as in life and all the more cruel because they have had longer to wait."

Consider the case of Carlyle and his wife. He was first described by the historian Froude, and Froude's thesis was that Jane Carlyle was a sensitive, unhappy, misunderstood woman compelled by Carlyle's selfishness and dyspepsia to lead a servant's life, only to be deceived as soon as fame brought her husband the opportunity of friendship with other ladies. But now read Miss Drew's recent book on Jane Carlyle. Her thesis is exactly opposite:

It is impossible not to admire Carlyle's unfailing gentleness and loyalty to her in the face of the often petty and querulous complaints she makes to him of his shortcomings, or what she considers are his shortcomings. She is often voluble, aggressive and resentful for no just cause whatever. She has a very nasty tongue when she is on edge; and no wonder Carlyle was hurt when she dismisses a long letter he has written her, by saying "it will read charmingly in your biography." . . . Of course she is always sorry after she has been unkind to him, but he *never* loses patience with her, assuring her that he is glad she makes her "bits of complaints" freely to him, as he can understand and sympathise with her in everything she has to suffer, if only she will trust him and believe in his love. . . . But she suffered all her life from a love of dramatising herself. . . . It was really perhaps the result of a craving for creative power, and the fact that she just fell short of any real creative power. She had a strong dash of the artistic temperament without any ability to produce art, and it was that which drove her to pose continually in some dramatic rôle.

Here are two entirely different theses. Well, both are supported by extracts from letters, all correctly quoted, all convincing. To a certain extent the different verdicts are due to the fact that Froude was a man and loved his heroine, whilst Miss Drew is a woman and has naturally more sympathy with Carlyle. But, for one reason or another, we are driven

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back always to the same conclusion: it is impossible, in history, to arrive at scientific truth.

Of course I am well aware that we shall be told: "You will have medical biographies; you will have studies of internal secretions; you will have biographies founded upon Freud". Very well, but will they be interesting? And, in the first place, how are we going to get them? What do we know about the medical history of the great men of the past? What will be known in the future about the medical history of men living today? Who is engaged at the present moment in preserving notes on the internal secretions of Einstein? Who is investigating the endocrine glands of Paul Valéry? Who is keeping a record of Bertrand Russell's dreams, so that the Freudian biographers may interpret them at a later date? And if all these points are not recorded even during the life of the individual, they too are unique, irreversible, irrecoverable. Even assuming that the scientific study of man makes great progress, that we develop the habit of attaching to great men a very complete *dossier* of records from the physico-chemical or biological points of view, how are we to foresee that a man is going to be great? Who is to choose the subjects for observation at a youthful stage? Even if you assume that we shall reach the stage of establishing a vast medical bureaucracy and that each one of us will have a formidable *dossier* filed in some ministry of hygiene, can you seriously believe that what we shall find in those files will be the truth about a man?

Think of your own life. Imagine that from the Elysian Fields you are privileged to contemplate the labors of your biographer. Would you be pleased to see him poring over dreams and statistics? "But that is not myself," you would say, "those things were of no interest except to my doctor." Would you like to see him turning over the pages of your books and deducing from them that you had done things quite foreign to your nature? "That is not myself," you would say, "that is the work of my imagination." Would it please you to see him collecting phrases from your letters? "That!" you would say. "Why, but I never thought a word of it even at the moment when I was writing it!" Then he indiscreetly opens your diary, and you would pityingly murmur: "Why bother with that fortnight during which I passed through a crisis of mad folly?"

The truth about your own life? Why, you would be very hard put to it to describe it yourself. It is a confused medley of actions, thoughts, and feelings, very often contradictory, yet possessing a certain unity which is, as it were, a sort of musical tone. Your life is written in C minor or in A major. You feel it, but you would have great difficulty in expressing it, and, fundamentally, you would wish your biography to be written with effort, with pleasure, with hesitation, with a certain amount of touching-up, and also with a strict care for truth—a care not only for truths of fact (so far as the unfortunate biographer can attain them) but for that profounder truth which is poetic truth.

I believe that we are powerless to do more for great men than what we could wish to be done for ourselves. Truth? Yes, we must follow it with all our soul. Σὺν ὁλῇ τῇ ψυχῇ εἰς τὴν ἀληθείαν ἴτεον should be the motto of every historian. With all our soul—that is, with all our attention, with all our respect, with all our intelligence, but also with such faculties of artistic divination as we may possess. It would be dangerous and absurd to try to establish too close a parallelism between the exact sciences and the historical sciences. "Can we know the truth about a man?" we asked at the beginning. No, we can try to fix those changing lights and shades, we can try to produce the sound of that individual and authentic note, but it is a truth of a kind totally different from that which is pursued by the chemist or the physicist.

Such is our reply to the first question.

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Now let us come to the second. To what degree is it possible to study an epoch of history in the course of writing a man's life? To what degree is it true to make a man the central figure of an epoch? Morley puts this point very well at the beginning of his *Life of William Ewart Gladstone:*

> Every reader will perceive that perhaps the sharpest of all the many difficulties of my task has been to draw the line between history and biography—between the fortunes of the community and the exploits, thoughts, and purposes of the individual who had so marked a share in them. In the case of men of letters, in whose lives our literature is admirably rich, this difficulty happily for their authors and for our delight does not arise. But where the subject is a man who was four times at the head of the government—no phantom, but dictator—and who held this office of first minister for a longer time than any other statesman in the reign of the Queen, how can we tell the story of his works and days without reference, and ample reference, to the course of events over whose unrolling he presided, and out of which he made history?

The biographer takes an individual man as a central figure and makes the events of the period begin and end with him; they must all revolve round him. Now, does this arbitrary attitude condemn biography as a historical work? No, for since history cannot, like physical science, examine what happens in a closed system, all histories are themselves subject to arbitrary limitations. If a history of France is written, the history of the world will again be made to revolve round France, just as the author of a life of Wellington makes England revolve round Wellington. If we trust to Plutarch, we shall see Greece and Rome directed by some thirty intelligent wills —a state of things palpably absurd and inconsistent with the normal life of nations. According to the historical determinism of a Karl Marx, for instance, the mere intention to write a biography is a crime against truth; but the Marxists have committed this crime by their own biographies of Karl Marx and of Lenin. Clearly, then, it is inevitable.

The change of form thus imposed on history will be greater in proportion to the greatness of the individual man. Let us take an example from antiquity.* The history of the time of Alexander is known to us almost entirely through the biographies of Plutarch and Arrian. Consequently this fragment of history has always been incompletely treated. Obsessed by the vision of Alexander, historians have neglected to study the evolution of Macedon—how it had borrowed from the civilization of Greece the sources of its strength—industry, a navy, armaments; and not the sources of its happiness—individual liberty and esthetic culture.

This is the key to the explanation of the Macedonian Empire, which broke up of itself as soon as moral decadence, following in the train of culture, set in. This obsession by the personality of Alexander has also prevented the historian from realizing the condition of the Persian Empire before its fall. This empire had no military strength, as may be seen from the Retreat of the Ten Thousand, and as it appears to have suffered little from internal dissensions, we must conclude that it enjoyed peaceful prosperity to a high degree —a fact which the Greek and Plutarchian view of Alexander's civilizing conquest has deliberately neglected. Thus the biographer's error—an error due to the very nature of his task—will have been to conceal whole peoples under the shadow of a man, and to present a man as the necessary and sufficient reason for events which transcend him.

If biographies were the sole source of history, one would get the idea that history was made up of individual opponents whose struggles produced the events of the period. The opposition between Gladstone and Disraeli, a very attractive theme for a biographer is important only if it is made clear that be-

* I am indebted for some valuable suggestions on this subject to M. Jean Prévost. For a Marxist theory of history see also A. L. Rowse's remarkable little book, *On History.*

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low it lay the corresponding strata of the English social structure. The amateur biographer would, indeed, end by building up a history lacking in chronological continuity and in unity of development; and, owing to the need of representative men, the result would be an Emersonian morality and a Cæsarian theory of politics.

On the other hand, consider what a unity, and I would add what beauty, there may be in a fragment of history which contains no biographies and in which biographers have been obliged to start from history and from nothing else—I mean a fragment such as the Peloponnesian War. There no personal record occurs to mar the objectivity of Thucydides, but the very simplicity of such a eulogy is proof of its falseness. The complete agreement of historians on the subject of the Peloponnesian War would be ruined if, for example, there was in existence a biography of Cleon written by a democratic historian.

As always, it is difficult to deduce a general rule. In certain instances it is true that the personal action of one man has changed the life of a country. Between 1800 and 1815 the life of France was closely bound up with that of Napoleon.* On the other hand, in the case of Queen Victoria, Mr. Strachey has wisely made his book a personal portrait rather than a large historical picture. The influence of the Queen on English politics was certainly considerable, but she was only one amongst many other factors.

It is interesting to watch our own times because there we can seize upon history in the making. In two cases at any rate I have been brought to conclude that the personal action, the character of a man, may become the determining factor in the phenomena of general history. One is the creation of French Morocco by Lyautey. There we may see, perfectly clearly, a country modelled by a single man and becoming, in fact, an enlarged representation of a man's personality. The other is the financial relief of France by M. Poincaré in 1925. But in both cases the statesman and the empire-builder fill the centre of the picture only for quite a short time. To fix them there for the whole of their lives would be to make an artificial picture. The biographer must not try to play the historian too long. Their objectives are different. Biography is the story of the evolution of a human soul; history should be for him what it is for the portrait-painter, the background against which he sets his model.

Is it not curious how the metaphor of the portrait-painter crops up as soon as one begins to talk of the biographer? And does not this resemblance itself help us to answer the question we put at the beginning of this article? "Ought biography to be a science?" we asked. We might as well ask whether the portrait-painter ought to be a scholar.

The reply is obvious: the portrait-painter should be a man of integrity, he should aim at a likeness, he should know the technique of his craft, *but his objective is the painting of the individual, whereas science is concerned only with the general.* And our reply accords with that of Mr. Strachey:

> That the question has ever been, not only asked, but seriously debated, whether History was an art, is certainly one of the curiosities of human inaptitude. What else can it possibly be? It is obvious that History is not a science; it is obvious that History is not an accumulation of facts, but the relation of them. . . . Facts relating to the past, if they are collected without art, are compilations, and compilations, no doubt, may be useful, but they are no more History than butter, eggs, salt and herbs are an omelette.

* Professor Trevelyan has written an essay, *If Napoleon Had Won the Battle of Waterloo.* The argument of Rowse and of the Marxist historians is that this victory would not have greatly changed the history of the world. On the other side, see Renouvier's *Uchronie,* a fine book, too little known.

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ARE LITERARY HOAXES HARMFUL?

A DEBATE

for the Affirmative: Lincoln Colcord

HAVING been unavoidably drawn into the controversy over Joan Lowell and her book, *The Cradle of the Deep,* and wishing to accept my share of responsibility for the exposure of this literary hoax, I welcome the opportunity afforded by THE BOOKMAN to make a brief statement of what I believe to be the fundamental issues involved. These issues, it seems to me, are profoundly significant, and too obvious to permit of evasion or denial. Without exaggeration, I believe that in this affair we are face to face with a test case of the whole modern development of literary activity in America. *The Cradle of the Deep* at one stroke has raised the entire question of the integrity of writing, of publishing and of criticism.

Not that the literary hoax is anything new. There have been literary hoaxes by the dozen and hundred, many of them fairly recent, others of historic importance, and some so clever, so presentable, so genuinely artistic, that on the score of literary ethics the question of their authenticity might almost seem to be a debatable one. There have been hoaxes so good that they did not need to be put forward as hoaxes at all to gain literary distinction; and these have taken their own unique place in the accepted body of literature.

Yet it is true also that throughout the course of literary history the practice of hoaxing the reading public has met with universal condemnation; and this feeling has been bound up with the most sacred traditions and principles of literary effort. A hoax in this field was a peculiarly insidious piece of charlatanism. What was the need of it, in the first place? If a person could write a book, a book worthy of being read, why could he not write and publish it straightforwardly, and let it stand on its own merits? The only object of the hoax, obviously, was to gain undeserved attention for a piece of work by exciting public curiosity, by establishing false loyalties which would have to be broken down step by step, and by all the publicity which could be drawn into the controversy.

All this has been thoroughly understood since the beginnings of literature. A literary hoax was an intellectual dishonesty, which struck at the very roots of artistic and cultural development. When a hoax was exposed, those innocently involved in it were shocked beyond measure, and made every effort to rectify the error; while those deliberately involved in it suffered at the hands of public opinion the natural consequences of charlatanism. In no reputable quarter could one have heard in the past the statement that under certain circumstances a literary hoax might be permissible, or that the practice was in any way justified.

This brings us directly to the real significance of the present case. I believe that today, for the first time in literary history, we have the spectacle of a hoax of first proportions

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which has been fully exposed, while no one concerned in the fraud, either innocently or deliberately, seems greatly disturbed. No one concerned, apparently, feels responsible to literary ethics for a grave fault; no one concerned is disposed to try to make amends. The publishers of the work, instead of admitting facts which have become known, attempt through advertising and publicity to maintain the validity of claims which have been disproved. The critics who supported the book take refuge in the argument that it does not matter whether it is a hoax or not, so long as it is good reading; and criticism in general seems to lean towards this opinion. The machinery of literary publicity, which spent itself in furthering the hoax before it had been exposed, has done very little to correct the false impression which it was one of the chief means of creating.

Here at last, then, we have something new under the sun—a plain breach in the heretofore universally accepted standards of literary ethics. And the question before us clearly is: Shall we now accept as legitimate a literary hoax which has become commercially successful? Shall this be the future criterion of writing and publishing and criticism in America?

Joan Lowell's book, *The Cradle of the Deep,* was brought out as a work of genuine autobiography. It purports to be the story of the author's life on shipboard from the age of eleven months, when she was first taken from home by her father, to the age of seventeen years. During this period, according to the narrative, she lived practically continuously on shipboard, the "only woman thing" aboard. The schooner named as the scene was supposed to have been employed in the copra trade between the South Sea Islands and Australia. Romantic and thrilling adventures follow each other in quick succession. At the end the schooner is destroyed by fire and sinks beneath the waves, while the author saves her life by swimming three miles to land.

The authenticity of this book was the only solid peg on which it hung. As a merely imaginative tale of seafaring experience—that is, as a work of fiction—it was both humanly and nautically ridiculous; the picture of sea life presented was nothing but a grotesque caricature. Trashy and unsubstantial, it was a vulgar book on the score of literary taste. But if people could be brought to believe that the events related in it actually happened, that was another matter. An impression of truth would invest both book and author with a romantic glamour.

At any rate, it was as authentic autobiography that the book was launched and extensively advertised by the publishers. Two nautical experts in the literary field went sponsors for it. As authentic autobiography it was accepted almost without question by the critics, by the literary profession in general, by the advisory board of the Book-of-the-Month Club; and the reading public quite naturally fell into line, since all its means of literary information told it to do so. The stage was set for a tremendous commercial success—on a basis of the book's authenticity.

A few weeks after publication it developed that the book was not authentic. As far as can be learned, Miss Lowell went to sea with her father for one long voyage only, from San Francisco to Australia and return, accompanied by her mother and two brothers. Instead of burning and sinking beneath the waves the schooner is still afloat. If Miss Lowell ever saw the South Sea Islands it must have been in passing through them on her one Australian voyage.

Most of her early life was spent as a school girl in Berkeley, California.

Suppose Robert Louis Stevenson, instead of publishing his *New Arabian Nights* as pure fiction to the delight of readers for all generations to come, had chosen to launch "The Story of the Young Man With the Cream Tarts" and all the rest of this fine series as actual experiences which had happened to him in London; and suppose his publishers

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had filled the press with advertisements of the extraordinary adventures (absolutely true to fact), which this young author had encountered in the teeming life of the greatest city in the world; and suppose the critics had so far forgotten themselves as to swallow the preposterous tale whole and had celebrated Stevenson as one who had in person escaped marvellously from the clutches of the infamous Suicide Club; and suppose the reading public of England had thrilled to the feeling that such desperate things could be going on in their midst, and had rushed to the bookstalls to buy the personal experiences of this young man by the tens of thousands; and suppose, when the book had become immensely successful and when the hoax had been uncovered, Stevenson's publishers had continued to insist, through publicity and advertising, that the Suicide Club was a reality, that the author had actually been drawn into its toils, that the Prince of Bohemia was a veritable friend of his, and so forth. Well, it might have been amusing for a while, but what would have been the ultimate result? Stevenson might have made a bit more money; but would it have enhanced his reputation and the reputation of his publishers, in the long run? Would it have seemed like legitimate writing and publishing? Would it have been a good thing for literature?

I do not think that the comparison with Miss Lowell's book is greatly overdrawn. We recognize at a glance, of course, that the case just outlined could never have occurred. Stevenson wanted to write fiction, and was mainly concerned with the quality of his product. Critical opinion in England (and in America at the time) would have laughed the hoax out of court before it had gained a footing. Publishing ethics would have condemned it at the start, or repudiated it as soon as it had been exposed. Yet today a case equally fantastic has occurred in the American literary field, with entirely different professional results.

The publishers of *The Cradle of the Deep* presumably believed the work to be authentic when they accepted it and brought it out. Yet their attitude since the exposure of the hoax has been open to the most serious criticism. The only inference to be drawn from published statements of their position is that they feel it makes no particular difference whether the book is truth or falsehood, fact or fancy, so long as the public wants to buy and read it. They apparently see nothing questionable in having vouched for the book as fact with the weight of their professional standing, in having advertised and promoted it as fact and in having created a public demand for it on a basis of misrepresentation.

Instead of frankly admitting *The Cradle of the Deep* to be a hoax when the point had been abundantly proved, and selling it as fiction from then on, the publishers made redoubled efforts to bolster up the book's authenticity. They explained discrepancies with "facts" which were promptly shown to be as false as the original statements.

So far, indeed, have we drifted from ethical grounds in these matters that the publishers in question seem to have welcomed the proof that the book is a hoax, boasting that its sales had "increased 100 percent since the controversy reached its climax". One constantly hears echoed in professional literary circles this approval of publicity regardless of its ethical significance. So many columns of publicity always achieve a given result. In promoting sales, it is just as effective to label a book a fraud as to spread the news that it is a genuine work of art, providing you get the same amount of space for the story.

This may be the creed of certain advertising and publicity groups—it may increasingly be the creed of the literary profession, for all I know—but I do not believe it is the creed of the reading public or of the country at large. A knock may be as good as a boost, for that is a matter of opinion; but a fraud can never be as good as the genuine article, for that is a matter of fact. It is not true, and never will be true, that really adverse pub-

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licity is as effective as favorable publicity. It is not true that the American public likes to be hoaxed, or that it is blind to ethical standards. And in the present case, it is to the reading public that we must look for an ethical ruling when other means apparently have failed.

For it should be plain, now that the controversy has run its course, that American criticism has temporarily abrogated its function in this instance. Indeed, this is the chief significance of the case. Consider the adoption of Miss Lowell's work by the Book-of-the-Month Club. Mr. Heywood Broun has told us exactly how it happened. "I think it was Dr. Canby," he says, "who objected that, while *The Cradle of the Deep* was readable, it had no literary merit. This maddened me to flights of eloquence. It seemed to me that the Book-of-the-Month Club sent out too many worthy books. . . . Readability, I contend, is in itself literary merit of a high order. By dint of talking I managed to get several judges to say that they would vote for *The Cradle of the Deep* as their second or third choice. This sufficed to put it over." When an issue of first importance in current literature is determined with such a shocking lack of organization and responsibility as this, the judges concerned can hardly claim to have exercised the function of criticism.

When it comes to those who, with the publishers, maintain that it makes no difference whether an autobiography is a hoax or not, or to those who claim that all autobiography is largely fiction, it is difficult to know what sort of answer to make. One thought that the matter of literary integrity had been threshed out a long while ago. Yet the viewpoint expressed above has been amazingly prevalent in the present case. Except for expressions of it, the literary publicity columns have been largely silent. No one seems to care to tackle the real issues. The press published the facts of the exposure, since its news value could not be denied, but editorial comment has been almost universally withheld.

There is a more direct answer, however, to be made to the two nautical critics, Mr. William McFee and Captain Felix Riesenberg, who vouched for the book in the beginning. It may be said in passing that from a nautical standpoint Miss Lowell's book is probably one hundred percent incorrect. I am not aware that it contains a single nautical allusion phrased as a sailor would phrase it, and many of the commands, incidents, and scenes are the height of nautical absurdity. I can only believe that Mr. McFee and Captain Riesenberg (who is the author of a treatise on seamanship) read it in a fog. Yet since the exposure of the hoax, both Mr. McFee and Captain Riesenberg have come forward with additional support for the book.

Both men say that because the book in their opinion is good reading the question of its authenticity is a trivial one.

The obvious point is that, regardless of this latter-day argument, these men of letters did stand sponsors for the book as nautical experts, and their names as nautical experts are still being used in advertising and publicity. I have before me a recent advertisement in which Mr. McFee and Captain Riesenberg are listed among "A Few of the Famous Mariners Who Hail *The Cradle of the Deep,* etc." That is, although the hoax has been abundantly proved, these critics are still helping to keep alive the misrepresentation.

What does it matter? It matters a great deal; for the case under discussion is nothing but an indication of the dangerous trend of altogether too much thought and opinion in America since the world war. Old standards are going by the board. Nothing can be believed with conviction any longer; nothing is false and nothing is true; only the thing that pays is worth pursuing. If a fellow has launched a successful fraud, why, good for him. Who wants to cut down his rake-off? He is a smart fellow; turn to and lend him a hand. Ideals? Ethical objections? What do they bring in? Only queer, unworldly chaps bother with such unprofitable notions.

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We have been familiar for generations with the gradual deterioration of standards in business and material production under the encroachments of industrialism. The old guild spirit of honest workmanship for the satisfaction of the worker has long since vanished from the industrial picture; it finds no place in the modern world. The making of money is indeed the main standard, and other standards bend to it to an increasing degree. The old-fashioned sort of honesty in business which gave a man an inner glow of rectitude but which unquestionably lowered his income is seen less and less. A man's word is no longer as good as his bond. All is competition and fierce commercialism; stringent laws are invoked to keep even the remaining standards operative. The disposition to function on ethical lines is not present in the body of modern industrialism.

But up to the present time this spirit had not made itself seriously felt in the field of literary production. By common consent the practices of literature were held to be especially sacred, and no one laid violent hands on them. That is to say, although the business of publishing books was, as ever, a commercial one, and although the writing of books had its legitimately commercial side, the standards of literary integrity remained on a high ethical plane. Books lay at the heart of spiritual life, and in a sense all culture depended on them. Even in the business of publishing, this close association with the deepest spiritual aspirations of the race had its compelling effect, and served to stop at the source any thought of the outright commercialization of the enterprise. Publishers have clearly recognized that, in dealing with any book, they were handling an article which in its own spiritual sphere would have to conform to the ethical standards of the critical profession and of the reading public; hence to sacrifice deliberately the quality of their product would be ultimately to undermine, if not to destroy, their own business.

But if today we have reached the point of progress where a literary hoax is condoned as good business; where publishers have no regard for the authenticity of a work, so long as it is successful; where the critical profession, organized through its publicity channels as never before, is also willing to disregard standards and quality of product, and to delude the reading public into a false demand; where deterioration has at last struck at the stronghold of spiritual integrity in the written word; then we have fallen on evil times in American literature. If charlatanism is to be more successful than honest writing, and win its way through advertising and publicity on which there is no check, the foundations of all literary effort are seriously threatened. All those who seek to express themselves, and who make their living by writing, will be ultimately affected by it. The Joan Lowell case is a signpost showing in no uncertain way the path we are to follow unless we change our course. It is high time we sat down and looked the scene over.

for the Negative: Heywood Broun

If Mr. Lincoln Colcord were a lawyer presenting a case in court and I an opposing attorney it might appear expedient to enter no more than a demurrer to his argument, for my legal friends tell me that this is the profession's way of saying, "Oh, what the Hell!" Even now it does not seem to me in the least important whether Joan Lowell swam three miles with three kittens or one hundred yards with no cats at all. Yet in justice to Mr. Colcord's earnestness and the wide range of his righteous indignation some answer must be made.

I did not expect to find the world war and the waning of the guild system dragged into the controversy regarding *The Cradle of the*

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Deep nor do I yet admit that they belong. One or two of Mr. Colcord's statements had best be challenged at the beginning before an effort is made to reduce the argument to its fundamental core. For instance, Mr. Colcord says that since the beginning of literature, "a literary hoax was an intellectual dishonesty, which struck at the very roots of artistic and cultural development". This simply is not historically true and scores of books from Genesis to Robinson Crusoe have an honorable place in literature in spite of the fact that their authors consciously drew a long bow. Or, to refer to more modern instances, I have heard no one assert that fundamental honesty was marred by either *Trader Horn* or Frederick O'Brien's *White Shadows in the South Seas,* both of which were presented as authentic autobiographical material. In fact Mr. Colcord is arguing against tradition and not with it. He speaks lovingly of old standards but in reality asks for a new dispensation. From the days of Marco Polo to Joan Lowell's the public has always granted the returned traveller a license even wider than that allowed to poets.

Mr. Colcord seeks to fasten a personal responsibility upon me because I admitted that it was my liking for *The Cradle of the Deep* which largely determined its choice by the Book-of-the-Month Club. I said that the book received no vote for first place but my own and that after extended discussion I persuaded other judges to accept it since it was their third or second choice. Lincoln Colcord refers to this as "a shocking lack of organization". But I ask him what he would suggest in the case of a five-cornered choice when each of the judges had a different candidate? It makes no difference whether you are choosing books or brigantines. When there is no agreement, consideration must be given to secondary preferences. Surely there is precedent for this. So it was at Marathon. Greek leaders in conference sought to select a general and each candidate received one vote for the supreme command, but Miltiades got all the second choice selections. This would rather suggest that Miltiades voted for himself for both first and second, which may have been an immoral thing. However he did manage to win the battle, which lifted him above the criticism of posterity.

But the truly fundamental difference in the point at issue lies in Mr. Colcord's extraordinary statement that if Robert Louis Stevenson had launched his *New Arabian Nights* as a record of actual experience the book would have been deservedly laughed out of existence before it had gained a footing. It is my feeling that the book would have had precisely the same merit whether it was called true or fictional by the author. A brief preface asserting authenticity could hardly have altered the cadences of Stevensonian prose or in any way affected the richness of imagination. It almost seems as if Lincoln Colcord had within him some shred of that old Puritan prejudice against all novels. Fiction has always had to fight against Roundheaded criticism which said that whatever was fictional was immoral since it was untrue.

This seems to me a very limited conception of truth. I will not admit that only such things as happen are true. A fine novel may be as faithful to human experience as the most deadly literal chronicle of events. And many a fairy story touches deeper verities than the arrival-of-the-buyers column in your daily newspaper. Dunsany wrote once a telling one act play about a prophet who was tempted to predict falsely a great doom upon a city. At least when he foretold the tragedy he believed that he spoke falsely but the gods made good his word and at the appointed time the city rocked and was laid low. Many a man has set down on paper lightly invented incident only to find that he has revealed more underlying truth about himself than the most faithful autobiography would contain. To patients who report that they are unable to produce dreams the psycho-analyst often says, "Make some up for me. It will do just as well".

Ancients admitted the difficulty of drawing hairlines between the false and true and this

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feat has hardly grown more simple in the Age of the Unconscious. If I record with factual accuracy some series of events which happened to me I have arrived at a truth of sorts. But it is not the only sort of truth. Suppose I color and heighten and even fabricate episodes more exciting. I am still not beyond all contact with the truth, for in this case I am drawing material out of visions and deepest longings. The success of *The Cradle of the Deep* lay in the fact that it expressed a wish-fulfillment which is well-nigh universal. Mr. Colcord, versed in nautical lore, was alienated by errors; but only a small proportion of readers are able seamen. The rest of us sailed strange seas with Joan and exulted in triumphs over storm and punishing drought. We heard the drums of savage tribes and watched the seas foam over coral. Beyond stock market tables and medical treatises it is not an author's responsibility to be true so much as to seem true. I deplore the coming of any day when the business of writing is to become wholly the concern of able seamen.

Mr. Arthur Warner, himself Colcordian in actual experiences with the deep, expressed his doubts about *The Cradle of the Deep* well before formal exposure had been made of gross inaccuracies. His scepticism rested upon no single incident so much as upon the wealth of episode. Mr. Warner said that all true sailors knew the "eventlessness" of nautical life. It was the landlubber, he explained, who still thought of the ocean as a place of strange adventure. In other words Mr. Colcord would have us substitute the dull and dreary for the imaginative. He would abolish not only the last coast of Bohemia but its attendant ocean. I have no doubt that mankind could be cured of its romantic conception of long voyages beyond the equator if some hard-fisted writer insisted enough upon rubbing our noses in the brine. But would the world be any happier for its disillusion? Two aspects of life have always been regarded as fair hunting ground for the romantic. I refer to the prow of a ship and the back of a stage. That old sentimentalist, Mr. David Belasco, has made a life-long fight against such realists as wanted to take the public behind the scenes to show them how thunder was made. He said it spoiled the fun.

It seems to me that Lincoln Colcord is a spoilsport in the matter of ocean narrative. Factual truth may make man free but it may also give him very little amusement in his new domain. Certain dreams and misconceptions are vital in a prosy world. Of course under certain circumstances I would hail Mr. Colcord's exposure as very necessary. If infants of eleven months volunteered by the thousand for sea duty then I would think it wise to tell them that Joan's Freudian plan for getting rid of her mother and becoming an able-bodied seaman was but a wish-fulfillment dream. And likewise if hundreds of toilers devoted their life-savings to acquiring each one a desert island then, too, it would serve a good purpose to inform them that there was no Robinson Crusoe or, for that matter, a black Friday. But since the great bulk of us never will by any chance reach the little islands of the sea or put the long voyages to the test, what does it matter if we think of dun stretches in terms of purple and of gold?

Since Lincoln Colcord was constantly outraged by *The Cradle of the Deep* it was for him a bad book and a dull one too. There were others who accepted it as gospel and thrilled, and still more who winked here and there and yet felt a fascination. Have they been hurt, and if so how? To the Book Club which sponsored *The Cradle of the Deep* there came a number of letters from those who said, "We liked the book and had a good time in reading it. Why should we be angry because some of it isn't true?" In fact I cannot understand at all the vehemence of most the resentment. Lincoln Colcord knew it as a hoax from the beginning, so his cause of complaint can hardly be deep-seated. Those who were fooled ought to remember that from the beginning of time it has always been the nar-

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rator's trick to seem convincing. When kings and vassals clustered in some ancient castle to hear the minstrel's tale it never was his custom to begin by saying: "None of this I am about to relate is true". Instead he introduced even the tallest tale with "Once upon a time" —by which he meant to convey the impression that somehow and somewhere the thing had happened. And as the story progressed and dragons breathed fire in the general direction of some forlorn princess many eyes in the firelit circle grew wide with excitement.

Quite often there was present in the circle some great, great, great grandfather of Mr. Colcord and he would interrupt the tale to say, "It never happened". But then it was the custom to take the current Colcord and drop him in the moat; for ancient man was not disposed to let any factualist spoil a good story.

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THE STATIONARY JOURNEY

by Edwin Muir

Here at my earthly station set,
  The revolutions of the year
Bear me bound and only let
  This astronomic world appear.

Yet if I could reverse my course
  Through ever-deepening yesterday,
Retrace the path that brought me here,
  Could I find a different way?

I would see eld's frosted hair
  Burn black again, and passion rage
On to its source and die away
  At last in childhood's tranquil age.

Charlemagne's death-palsied hand
  Would move once more and never rest
Until, by deadlier weakness bound,
  It strove against his mother's breast.

Saint Augustine gives back his soul
  To stumble in the endless maze,
And after Jesus Venus stands
  In the full centre of men's gaze,

While still from death to life to naught
  Gods, dynasties and nations flit;
Yet for a while among the sand
  Unchanged the changing Pharaohs sit.

Fast the horizons empty; now
  Nothing's to see but wastes and rocks,
And on the thinning Asian plains
  A few wild shepherds with their flocks.

* * * * *

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So back or forward, still we strike
  Through Time and touch its dreaded goal.
Eternity's the fatal flaw
  Through which run out world, life and soul.

Here this long *now;* all else the void.
  Yet through the void forever go
Great energies past death or thought;
  I know them, yet I only know

Vast hieroglyphics where power in
  Solidity more pure than stone
Sleeps through the circle, pillar, arch,
  Spiral, cone and pentagon.

And there in transmutation's glass
  No mortal eye has ever read,
Or told what soul and shape are there,
  Blue wave, red rose and Plato's head.

To the mind's eternity I turn
  With leaf, fruit, blossom on the spray,
See the dead world grow green within
  Imagination's one long day.

There while outstretched upon the Tree
  Christ looks across Jerusalem's towers,
Adam and Eve in endless bliss
  Lie side by side within their bowers.

There while fast in the Roman snare
  The Carthaginians think of home,
A child carefree in Carthage streets
  Hannibal fights a little Rome;

David and Homer tune their harps,
  Gaza starts up from its wreck,
Samson stands free, Delilah's shears
  Join his strong ringlets to his neck,

And Ilium's turning tumbling towers
  Hang stationary in the air,
And Hector holds the unshaken walls:
  All are there, or nothing's there.

A dream! The astronomic years
  Patrolled by stars and planets bring
Time led in chains from post to post
  Of the conquering Zodiac ring.

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"LANG SYNE'S MISS"

THE BACKGROUND OF JULIA PETERKIN, NOVELIST OF THE OLD SOUTH

by Isadora Bennett

WHILE a newly aroused interest from the outside world centers upon the "vanishing South", that glamorous, fading picture of other days and other ways passes deeper into the shadow with the setting of each sun. The ox-cart has given way to the tractor and truck. The highway searches out the causeways of Colonial times and throws its glistening length—for now it is paved—across the "deep swamp" and the wide savannah, that five or even two years ago were impenetrable. A new order has brought this about. And the very patrician class that has felt it an obligation to bring it about is the very class that will pass with the passing of the old.

By a strange irony, Julia Peterkin, author of *Green Thursday, Black April* and the Pulitzer Prize novel for 1928, *Scarlet Sister Mary,* represents in her own person the two extremes of the new order: the group that looks back with a lingering regret for these fading beauties and the constructive workers for a new South, whose very methods and whose very improvements must inevitably drive the old days and the old ways into deeper shadow.

Within her day as Mistress of one of the oldest plantations of the section, she has seen the changes that have determined the new trend of life in this modern South.

Challenged by the rest of the country, taunted for its "backwardness", this New South has staggered under its heavy burden of defeat, poverty, reconstruction; staggered, and, then, shouldering the burden, has moved forward. While the rest of the country took its backwardness for granted, it has had a renascence of life and of culture. It is precisely the same thing that happened in Ireland, and the thing that Stanislawsky tells us brought forth the artistic renascence of Russia in his youth. A patrician class, impoverished, and no longer able, alone, to carry the burden of private libraries, private schools and the still heavier burdens of a political aristocracy, found itself forced to break over old class lines and form a new gentility. In its first extravagances it yielded to demagogues in politics and to dilettantes and charlatans in the arts. This won for it the onerous title, awarded, I believe, by Mencken, "The Desert of the Bozart". But the reaction was quick, as popular reactions go, and soon, by a kind of natural instinct, the older patrician class established for itself a fine balance. Joining hands with the commercial viewpoint of the newer day, with its standards of activity and achievement, these people adopted a fine professionalism and applied it to all of life. A man's aptitude or professional training was subject to conscription for a charity—or any demand that represented the general good. Far from shunning politics, the young men are serving in the legislature and otherwise recognizing an obligation to the commonwealth. The Young South has taken up the challenge to remake life on a pattern that is new and vital.

The best of the old standards remain. But

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the old leisure and seclusion have gone. A new valuation has been put upon achievement. It is no longer to be despised. Yet there is the old *noblesse* to give leaven to the bread of daily life. And anyone who regrets the passing of the beautiful old times and manner must also rejoice in this new day. This is new life—this is sap rising in the old tree. Now the tree may live. Now the fine elements of the old order may survive—and in an imperishable form in the life and culture of a people.

Contributor both to the new order of life, and the old—which daily she lives—and contributor in a truly important way to the cultural forces that shall preserve them both, Julia Peterkin is an interesting and unique figure.

One of the younger novelists, and one of the chief contributors to the literature of Negro *genre,* she stands as exponent of the old. In a sense, she belongs to the group in the South, still large, that looks on the past with a lingering regret. Yet as novelist she belongs to the Young South, by virtue of the fact that she is preserving the impermanence of memory in the permanent mould of culture. In this she belongs to the forward-looking group. Not only through her writing but also as Mistress of one of the famous plantations of her state, she represents the Old and the New South at one and the same time. She lives the old order daily.

Life on "Lang Syne", the Peterkin plantation, is as old as slavery time, except that on Saturday, instead of rations, there is a wage. There is practically the same responsibility and the same relationship between the owners and the Negroes under the new freedom. Yet the farming methods of the Master of this old place are the very methods that are fast revolutionizing farming conditions over the entire South. They will push the old days into still deeper shadow.

The irony of this situation lies in the fact that the very aims which belong to this New South, to which Julia Peterkin and her generation and her family fully subscribe, are the very ones that work toward changes that will probably make her the last "Miss" of this old place. Certainly "Miss Julia" is the last "Miss" Lang Syne Plantation will know in the old and pure sense of that term.

And Lang Syne is a place of famous "Misses". The traditions go back to Indian times, when the land was not yet even a Colonial grant, but a favorite hunting ground for a now extinct tribe, the Santees. A very persistent tradition, inherited by the Negroes from the Indians, has it that the Santees had a woman for a "Chief". She was so old that her skin "was like a great wrinkled bag in which her shrunken body lived". But she ruled with an iron hand. She was the "first Miss".

There were other "Misses". One had a husband of difficult temperament and inconstant domesticity. He left home one afternoon—"evening", as usage in these parts has it—for a little trip to Charleston and was gone twenty years. He did not think to return the family carriage, but one day after twenty years when the new carriage was sent to the station for some friends the coachman brought an unexpected guest—the husband of "Miss". He was old. He had come home to die. For once the usual hospitality was set aside. The coachman was instructed to drive the Master anywhere he chose to go but not to bring him home. A heroic mould, that, in which the Mistresses of this place are cast!

"Miss Julia" is their worthy successor. Indeed, she is, both actually and romantically, the ideal plantation Mistress. She characterizes herself as "a simple country-woman". Country-woman she is, every inch—in the broadest and fullest sense of that word. But simple she is not.

This tall, lithe person with such strikingly erect carriage, who rides her horse so well, whether to get the mail at the village post office, or to follow the hounds in the rare hunts (which are getting rarer), who follows the dogs in the old rice field to bag partridge, or sits for hours in a dugout shooting ducks

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and hearing the inimitable stories of some old Negro boatman, would serve the romantically-minded as an ideal far removed from the simple country-woman implied in her own characterization.

Yet this same decorative person with the beautiful red hair is a serious "dirt-farmer". Lang Syne has as much importance in agricultural circles as it has in literary circles. W. G. Peterkin, head of the house, comes of a family well known for developing a long-staple cotton in the uplands. Peterkin cotton-seed is at a premium. In the councils of this family so well known for its wisdom in matters of planting, her vote has weight and her advice is respected. It is at home that the farmer, Julia Peterkin, is best known. Every new experiment conducted on this very modern plantation is of absorbing interest to her. Many were conducted by her at one time or another as mere hobbies. Her present hobby is game chickens.

Julia Peterkin *by Edwin Earle*

Planting is her delight. All of the landscaping of the "Big House Yard"—which is virtually a park—was her work. But she takes her vegetable garden quite as seriously. Once, when advised for her health to stay out of doors and keep up active exercise, she acquired a small garden plow. To the vast amusement of the men of the family and the intense disapproval of the regular gardener, she learned to guide her plow, and a little planter as well, with perfect exactitude down the rows; and ever since she has had a vegetable garden with twice the yield those same rows had when they were planted by the recognized gardener.

She has a singularly perfect background for her position as Mistress of such a place—and for her work as novelist. A doctor's daughter, raised between the coast country, where her grandparents lived, and Sumter, where her father is still an important and interesting figure, her knowledge of the life she is recording began literally in the cradle. Her mother died in giving her birth, and she became the sole charge of a remarkable old Mauma. This relationship, which was more than usually intimate and complete, must have had a profound effect upon her. Actually Julia Peterkin used the "Gullah" dialect for her more important and personal thoughts before she used English. English was formal, good-behavior speech. When, later, she married William Peterkin, a wise and wonderful old woman, Vinner, became her son's nurse and, finding in Mrs. Peterkin the perfectly receptive person, she passed on all her wealth of lore. A great legacy to which others have added much. Everyone talks to Julia Peterkin, and everyone tells her all, as if she were grandmother, contemporary or very young child. For she was born with a caul—and on Hallowe'en, too. To "Little Breeze", all things appear clearly, all the secret things of earth. So who would hold back any little bits of information? Julia Peterkin, the old people would tell you, has "second sight". And perhaps she has, too!

When people speak to her as if she were a grandmother or a very young child, they are

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responding to a natural instinct. For she is both of these. One thinks of great age when one thinks of her—great age in the terms of Egypt, the Nile and the Sphinx. And one falls into the grandchild relation in her presence, even though one looks upon a tall, handsome person whose light step and shining hair do not bespeak age now, certainly—nor ever will. She is really as young as she is old: eternally young, eternally old. Such is the "Miss" and as such she is the rightful "Miss" of Lang Syne, one of the oldest and one of the most modern plantations in its section.

II

According to Mrs. Peterkin's own theory there are no Mistresses of Lang Syne. They are all guests. Lang Syne, the land itself, is Mistress of all who live there and accept its bounty. In her characteristic way, she says: "Let the land feed you and stick to your feet, and it owns you and has the power to hold you. The land owns its own people".

This particular land might well own the people who live on it. It is like an old witch woman with secret ways of "conjur". It belongs essentially and characteristically to the low country of South Carolina.

South Carolina is in so many ways the heart of the old South, and its own heart, the "low country", begins about forty miles below the state capital. Here the lazy old rivers widen and level lands spread wide fields of red and purple soil with only cabins for landmarks—cabins and gigantic, shaggy-barked jack-pines, outposts against a civilization that kills out giants like themselves. Here, where the low country begins, where the Santee and Wateree Rivers come together, is Fort Motte, a fort before the Revolution, and one of the oldest communities in this very old state. It was also a "naval base" for the English ships, which by following the deep channel could penetrate these river swamps and reach the fort. Officers in the British Navy were stationed here.

It is associated, too, with sea-dogs and pirates, Captain Kidd, Stede Bonnet, and other picturesque figures of this coast. The Indians and the Negroes of the region had stories of pirates and pirate gold buried here. Once a section gang, laying a new track, struck a curious metal box with their picks and dug it up. It contained a man's skeleton. Pieces of Spanish gold and fine English buttons of silver were all that were left of his brave finery, but the buttons indicated that he had been buried here in the earliest Colonial times. And the Spanish gold? An Englishman with Spanish gold? Certainly a "sea-dog". The saltiest kind of a "sea-dog".

The plantation, Lang Syne, is old, too; it is one of the few not broken up and destroyed by changing times. Its natural geographical entity, its inaccessible position, the richness of its land and the strong character of its Masters and Mistresses have held it together and saved it for posterity—and for the readers of Julia Peterkin.

Lang Syne has had rich lands since the days of rice planting. The uses of these lands changed with the changing ages. Rice and indigo gave place to cotton, and for many years these broad flat lands in every direction were white with blossom. Now fields that once were given over to cane and cotton and corn grow asparagus, wheat and oats, and some of the newer agricultural "frills" from the Orient and Japan. For W. G. Peterkin farms scientifically—"by de book". With a peculiar, ageless, timeless grace, this land manages to give forth a bounty from its red heart, no matter what the crop or what the season. Readers of Julia Peterkin's *Black April* will recognize a reflection of this in Uncle Bill's rumination in regard to the coming of the "boll-evil":

> De Boll-Evils is come; cotton's time is out. . . . I membuh good w'en dey had to give up plantin' indigo and ev'ybody said we was ruined. But cotton done jes' as good. Now cotton is failed. . . . An' we'd oughtto wait till we get some kind o' crop to take its place . . . .

This, as the history of "Blue Brook", home

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of so many of the black people of the novels, is also true of Lang Syne, home of so many of their originals.

For Blue Brook *is* Lang Syne—although the *mise en scène* and the name are, perhaps, more directly traceable to "Brook Green", another plantation formerly owned by Mr. and Mrs. Peterkin. But Lang Syne is the land that "holds" and owns the black people of Julia Peterkin's novels. It is the protagonist that looms in the background, a kind of primitive deity—a "Field God", if you will, deciding their destiny, ordering their lives.

The unbroken continuity of this plantation's past is like a single person's clear memory. This is perhaps what makes it an almost perfect field of observation for the person writing in the *métier* of folk interest. It is entirely of a piece. The group of Negroes on the place is entirely homogeneous. They are closely interrelated, in fact, like those of the fictitious Blue Brook. So common is the general background and so complete their group identity, that not a few pure African traditions have persisted.

Within the plantation group there exists an almost tribal organization, clannish, exclusive, with its own order of precedence. Here are all the elements of the tribe: these people are homogeneous; they are a wide family, their ancestors came from the same region, they have the same unbroken inheritance of tradition and traits. All of them are Gullah Negroes. This is a high type of very black African Negro with marked characteristics of speech. Great is their scorn of other Negroes, and they know and remember a great deal more about African origins than white men realize. Mrs. Peterkin has caught a reflection of this self-conscious sense of tribal superiority in *Scarlet Sister Mary* where Maum Hannah rebukes Mary for letting herself "get like a no-manners Dinkah".

So potent is this feeling that there is no place for an outsider coming into the "Quarters" at Lang Syne, even though of Gullah origin. Outsiders they begin, and outsiders they remain, though they may marry into the group and live many years in "the street". Usually, though, these newcomers leave before long. They do not belong. And they know it well.

Located as Lang Syne is, in the bend of the river, it is natural that the phrase that should come to describe all outsiders is "over-the-river people". "Over-the-river" is Philistia. All innovations and all suspicious strangers come from there.

The street on Lang Syne is as it was when it was the Quarters in slavery time. These old houses, built of cypress, are virtually weather-proof, they will not burn and they have not been allowed to fall into disrepair. Systematically, methodically, almost as a seasonal rite, their faces are painted white with clay brought from the "gut" near the spring. The street itself is no more than a red-clay gulley, worn smooth by wagon wheels and patting feet. A rambling line of cabins follows either side. The once-sharp angle of roof-beam and corner, blurring with the wear of time, and softened to the color of ash or moss, the background of life in the Quarters Street, is gray. Just so the background of this world is gray, whether it be in the woods, the cabin or the Big House yard. It is the gray of mist, the gray of Spanish moss—that strange parasite so characteristic of the low country and so picturesque, draping all the trees in fantastic and ghostly veils.

Against this gray background, as characteristic as the background itself, is the profusion of color, brilliant and exotic, which spills itself over everything. The gardens, the woods, the countryside—everything blossoms. The woods are like jungles, in which great, twisted lianas, often as heavy as young saplings, climb the tallest trees to send down cascades of wistaria, jessamine and trumpet-vine. In the street there is the same profusion, the same exotic color, provided not only by the blossoms that overrun every cabin to its roof-tree, but by the brighter color of frocks and kerchiefs. The color of life itself in the Quarters is exotic.

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Within the gray houses of the street life is what it was when those same houses were built. The fires are all kindled from the "old fire" which burned on Maum Ana'chy's hearth always. New households, setting up, came to the oldest fire on the place and "borrowed" a fire. Like the fire in the temple, the old flame is never allowed to go out. It is very like the pulse of a common heart. If it were to stop, something like the Twilight of the Gods would follow.

And the life of the white people who make their lives in the midst of this elaborate and highly organized primitive existence is necessarily involved with it. On this particular place there are about four hundred and fifty Negroes and about five whites. It is natural that some of this richly human stream should seep into the Big House yard. Intertwined, subtly, strongly, by bonds that cannot be broken, bonds of mutual responsibility, mutual dependence, mutual faith, the life of these two supposedly separate groups is interwoven into a single fabric. The relationship between the Masters of this plantation and its black people has the old intimacy and protective responsibility along with the newer responsibility of aiding a growing freedom. This is no light responsibility. It involves the health, the well-being, the standards of living, the degree of contentment of several hundred human souls. And destiny, through the workings of several centuries, has made the black people dependent on the white for certain human values that are important to life itself.

It is a supreme responsibility, but the Master of a plantation shoulders it. And how well he succeeds is proved, as in this particular case, by the attitude of the people on the place. Among these black people there is none of the lack of initiative attributed to the country Negro. They have rights, in which the Master protects them, and they share in the large communism of this place. There is genuine affection in the way they speak of "Cap'n" Peterkin. The land "holds its own people."

A large share of the human responsibility falls upon the planter's wife. "Miss" it is who must know of conditions—and relations. Many a "Miss" of my acquaintance has taken all the chances of exposure to an epidemic in order that she might save her people in the Quarters from ravages of cholera and smallpox. But these are only the obvious problems. There are the subtler ones of human relations: fights, sorrows, "wickedness".

The laws of the court are seldom just, or even applicable to the offenses of these children of earth. It is an old story, that many of the milder offenses have to be settled on the place. They cannot wait for the sessions of court. The guilt or innocence of the accused could not be established clearly enough to justify a warrant in many cases. If thrown upon the mercies of his Master the offender will often willingly confess and make restitution in so far as he is able; but this he will do only if he is sure of a personal justice, which he already respects.

"Miss" plays her part in all of this. If she were a psychologist she would be in the advance guard with the behaviorists. The important part of the business—far from that of bringing a culprit to justice—is the more social one of finding and strengthening his own morality, of maintaining the integrity of the code of behavior to which his group really subscribes. In so many ways, then, the position of "Miss" is close to that of the old Mauma who nurses on her hearthstone the old fire. She it is who must keep alive the living heart of the people. No wonder, then, that she knows this heart so profoundly well. The wonder is when she can express it, as Mrs. Peterkin does, with such perfect clarity. It is a miracle of coincidence that a talent may so perfectly serve a profound understanding.

Life is not all sorrows and wickedness and strife and this "Miss" wisely knows it. Caught at the flood and given immense latitude, the spirit is exuberant and relaxed. But it is the old spirit. And it finds its way into the round of daily life through old habits and old modes

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of living. At work, at play, at religious service, at the doors of life and of death, all of human relations in these gray houses along the Quarters Street at Lang Syne belong to the old order.

At work, the sturdy hands "hoeing an acre clean of grass", or chopping cotton, or ginning it—performing any of the wide range of tasks on this large place—sing the old songs. The song-leader is the work-leader. One lusty voice will "raise the tune" and down the row the song will spread. That's the way to get ahead with work.

There are the old ways of farming, planting, cultivating, harvesting, even. The old lore points out the right way. Book knowledge is suspect, coming in from outside to fill up the mind. If you fool with book knowledge you are bound to lose the old knowledge. And though the Master of Lang Syne reads out of a book about crops, the people with a protective attitude for him, keep to the old ways. He may put chemicals in the ground—as the book says to do. If things are planted right even book methods cannot hurt their growth. And the same old moon is there to tell you when to plant. Certain people have more power to make things grow. They are the ones to put the seed in the ground. These are exact truths, mathematical truths. Axioms. Who would fly in the face of such facts? So are all the other working truths of old times. An axe that won't cut, or a ploughshare, can be made to do its duty with the right conjure. Cows and chickens, all animals, may be governed and made to grow in fatness by the old knowledge. Mules are the creatures to serve man. And that is not merely because of their strength, as people seem to think. Mules have sense—"people-sense". They can understand everything that people and even creatures say. They understand any language. Horses, now, have no sense compared to mules.

At play, as at work, the old régime prevails. Although Charleston is not far away, the "Charleston" did not penetrate this countryside to corrupt the quaintness of the reel. The worldly ones here dance with primitive simplicity. To Harlem they would seem outlandish, "country". Here it is sin enough to "cross foots" when you dance; it is enough to be caught singing a snatch of a worldly song—for these the "sinner" must spend long days in the woods, "seeking", before he can be reinstated in the church.

But the one place of all places where the old order prevails in all the purity of old times is at "meetin' ". On plantations like Lang Syne (and they are growing rarer every day) the old service is preserved, with the spirituals, the "shout" or "ring-shout", as it is sometimes called, and the traditional sermon with its formal poetry and its story based on some epic of the Old Testament. Some of these old places have a meeting house or "Judy" House, but at Lang Syne service is held at Maum Ana'chy's cabin. Benches are brought in and lined up in rows against three walls of the cabin facing the fire—and the preacher. Those benches at back, where the sinners sit, are banked high. Perfect theatrical sense is in the instinct which plans all this, yet there is not a trace of self-consciousness in all the solemn arrangements. It is done as it has always been done. The place for the preacher is as unchanging as Heaven's Gate. The place for the deacons, who are to pat hands or beat sticks, is as settled by tradition as a High Church ritual. The good members sit up in front where grace is abundant. Meeting proceeds always with one of the traditional sermons, the singing of the spirituals, a formal prayer, extemporized by some gifted natural poet who happens to be a deacon, and finally the "shout".

The "shout" itself is not, as the name implies, connected with any vocal sound. It is the religious dance. Usually it begins slowly, a few members rising, moved by the spirit. Then, as the hand-clapping of the few men chosen for the function accelerates, so also does the moving ring of shouters. Faster and faster go the shuffling feet, never crossing, the shouters moving forward in a line, the line

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twining inside its own outer ring. Only members may shout. Those who have fallen from grace are ranged on the high bank of benches at the back. Their rapt faces give no indication of their fallen state. They are catching some of the crumbs of grace. The tiny black babies leap in their mothers' arms. The common heart has a loud pulse, and every heart here has caught it. Even the little cabin has caught it—and rocks on its stilts in perfect rhythm. A genuine miracle happens here every Wednesday night—Meeting Night. All share a common spring of grace—all have been bathed in the healing waters of Jordan River.

And wise "Miss Julia" not only recognizes the value of such a force for communal living and encourages the holding of services on the place, but is also often a sympathetic attendant at meeting. How well her attitude is understood is shown by the unaffected delight among the members as they make a place for her on one of the comfortable benches. She ascribes it to their perfect natural courtesy. I ascribe it in part, certainly, to her own courtesy and tact, and the deeply fine relationship that exists.

The old order prevails also at the doors of life and death. If meeting harks back to slavery times, then the manner of performing all the rites that belong to birth and death harks back to earlier days—to Africa. From Africa comes the "birthing charm", said over the mother by the old midwife. From Africa come Maum Vina's beads, mentioned in *Black April,* the beads that make the child's advent into this sorry world just a little more safe and certain. Magic beads, straight from Africa, they have been handed down by direct inheritance, and the charm passed on by an old woman for whom death waits at the door. Not until that time. A sacred charge is not to be handed around among the young and foolish. An example of the serious sense of responsibility involved with possessing a need-charm is shown in Maum Hannah's departure with Old Breeze in *Black April,* when she fears the floodtide and the "dugout boat" and knows that she "can't swim a lick"; yet she has no choice but to go—where her charm and her beads are needed.

Being a midwife and nursing the ills of life generally is more than a matter of mere skill, more than simply having experience. It is, in large part, based upon tribal standards of seniority and special healing gifts. These may be inherited, but they are extended by a knowledge of the healing herbs and roots. Healing by "conjure" and healing by a kind of practical medicine have joined hands here. There is no distinct line of demarcation. Gifts for healing, moreover, have nothing to do with learning or study. These follow, as a matter of course. If one is a good healer, or a good midwife, one learns the necessary things after a general consensus of opinion selects one for the calling. And outstanding gifts in this, as in other fields, are instantly recognized. (This is probably one of the points of superiority in tribal organization over civil organization. Perhaps we will be discovering that one day.)

None of us is too civilized (whatever that term may mean) in the face of death. It is no wonder, then, that here, more than in any other phase of life, tradition is preserved in all its purity. Here, above all, we need the old ways—and the old charms. When we mourn we are all primitive.

Everything must be done in the ritual of death to give the soul peace. It must not find itself forced to wander about the world a ghost or "ha'nt", putting "calls" on the living —knocking on their doors. The grave must be deep. The old burial ground is best. The dead need to be together. A grave is a lonely place. At Lang Syne, though new land was given over for a burial ground, it was long before anyone would use it. Finally an old Mauma, a superior person, whose trust in the Lord was great, had the courage to order her coffin, or "box", buried in the new graveyard.

The sun must "go down in the grave". Burying in the day is a new custom—and a

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poor one. On the grave of the departed must be put the objects that he last used—the trinkets in which he took particular pride in life. A handsome lamp, the last cup out of which he drank, the medicines of his last illness must be there and also his "toby" or "conjure charm". Anything that he might want, his returning spirit must be able to find right there on the grave. Else it will wander and search —and call upon the living. One year, to the very day, after the first burial is the second burial, or "laying of the ghost". All the ritual of the first burial must be re-enacted. The mourners must live over their grief. These are all reflections of the old order, which Mrs. Peterkin sees on her place every day and which she has recorded so faithfully in her novels. Also, passing daily before her eyes, are those less welcome signs of the new order. Places around are losing their people. The northern commercial agents stand at the outgoing trains and, while promising nothing, tell of far-away fields. The younger ones feel a call to try out new ways—"off yonder". Lang Syne has not lost many, but the day will come. Mrs. Peterkin herself says that it is not far off.

The people are encouraged to move off many of the plantations. The new responsibility, added to the old, has become too much for the planter. It is almost an impossibility to make one place support so many lives, under modern condition.

The old top-heavy system of estates is breaking down. There is too much land to farm and to be taxed. And there is too much yield to market, if the land is farmed as it ought to be. A planter would not only have to be a superior farmer, he must be a remarkably versatile and active business man to overcome distance and market conditions in the necessary manner. The old places are breaking up almost daily. The first of the new order of farmers are share-croppers and tenants. Some of the old estates are being bought for hunting preserves, but that will not in any way save the economic or agricultural situation.

In other ways the new order may be seen creeping out the long road from town. New methods have taken possession of Lang Syne. Lang Syne would be modern in any community. Observers and agents are sent from far away in Mississippi and Georgia to see how experiments conducted on this plantation are working out. The Negroes, whose fathers might conjure an axe to make the blade sharp, are themselves learning to repair the cotton gin, the tractor or some other more elaborate piece of machinery or equipment. The place is developing its own good drivers and mechanics. Daddy Champaign's long idle wheelwright and blacksmithing shop is discussed as a good place for the necessary machine shop. The picturesque old smoke-house, scene of the hog-killing of days gone, houses a gasoline engine that pumps water. The gin house is a small factory with its own machinery for ginning the long-staple cotton. In the river-swamp, one-time impenetrable haunt of "Plait-eye", "T'ree-foot" and all the other supernatural beings of shadow and mystery, power is geared up to bring out the giant gum-logs. The ha'nts and spirits of old time, even the hobgoblins, are driven deeper in the swamps.

For play these same men, who once found their amusement in crap games and reels in the woods, or in less orthodox cabins, now take to the town-road, The Big Road. The character of their fun-making is changing. It is catching some far-off echoes of Harlem. Praying and praising will go on in the old ways long after dancing has come in the new.

Even in the matters of life and death, the new times have invaded sacred ground and touched tribal custom. New laws make the old midwives and nurses take courses that conform to medical standards. But there is nothing in the new law which says that you may not repeat the old charm under your breath. The newer scientific methods are all right in their way. And their way is to supplement the old. A trained midwife told me at the end of all her training, "The lady-nurse

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teach we how to boil". And, as they are patient about white people's foolishness in other things, they indulge them also in this. They boil.

At the door of death, too, the Bury-League and industrial insurance have come to usurp the functions of neighbors and kin. No longer may one have a pine box made from a tree on the place and put together by one's friends; one must have a black casket. From "over the river" comes a hearse with all the fantastic trappings the Bury-League undertaker (who is always the organizer) can afford. Burying at night, he thinks, is all foolishness. The fine, shiny hearse has to be back "over the river" by that time and the bright green grass mats have to be under cover. Of course, belonging to the Bury-League insures one a fine city burying, and every one of the mourners is provided with a lily to carry in the processional around the grave. (A lily instead of the pine torch of old times!) But there is a bewildering uncertainty about it, too. Spirits accustomed to gentle, neighborly treatment do not "rest quiet" with the professional undertaker's methods.

Consequently, at Lang Syne, Bury-League or not, the old order is unchanged. With a superb dignity they tacitly proclaim to the undertaker and his kind that there is a kind of dignity he knows nothing about. And no matter what the hour appointed for the funeral, certain delays occur. They seem bound to happen—until, somehow or other, in these days as in the old ones, the sun "goes first in the grave".

It is in these matters of maintaining and preserving the common heart that Julia Peterkin stands out as such a remarkable "Miss". She will tell you, with a warm glint of humor, "I believe in the old knowledge—I always plant my garden by the moon". When one learns what she means by country-living, with all its rich complexity, one does not wonder that she finds this living of supreme importance, of such moment—indeed, that her writing is only an incidental expression of it. Certainly it is far more to her to be "Miss Julia", Mistress of Lang Syne, than Julia Peterkin, author of some of the most distinguished books of the last few years.

Somewhere in front of the red brick gateposts of Lang Syne is the great world. The new highway to Florida passes by—the breadth of the "big-field" away. The flying cars of the Florida tourists flash back and forth along its hard surface. And the owners get out to have lunches by the side of the road —or to take the inevitable photographs. But the real spirits of the region are retiring. They retreat from the winking eye of the camera into the mists and the moss. A hundred yards or so, back of the road, the iron grille of a Colonial graveyard hides behind the veil of Spanish moss that hangs from the live oaks. Here the old spirits stay. Here, too, with a kind of patrician reticence, the old headstones tell poignantly the story of old "Miss" and old "Cap'n" before memory. Immense sorrow hangs in these quiet woods—and a quiet pride. The people who live with and know them are natural mystics. Not the least of the mystics is Julia Peterkin, herself.

Like the graveyard, Lang Syne keeps a distance from the moving world. Like its mistress it is sophisticated, worldly—yet not "of the world". The field and the old graveyard stand as outposts between the great white house and the flying cars. There at the gate, keeping sentinel, passing between the sycamores of the avenue, for those who can see them, the old ghosts stalk still. Back of the avenue, is the house, new, but its every line expressive of the old days and the old hospitality. Its wings spread wide like a full-skirted dress, it drops a gracious curtsey to the passing world. Like the house, the Mistress, from the same serene retirement, looks on at that world with a frank puzzlement, a profound understanding—and with all the gracious tolerance of times gone.

For here lives the past in all its fullness —as it should—at Lang Syne.

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THE LETTERS OF JOSEPH CONRAD TO STEPHEN AND CORA CRANE

edited by Carl Bohnenberger and Norman Mitchell Hill

PART II

(The first selection of the letters of Joseph Conrad to Stephen Crane and his wife, printed last month, told of their meeting in England in October, 1897, and of their growing friendship through that winter and spring. As an introduction to the second instalment we reprint the final paragraphs of last month's commentary on the letters, concerning the outbreak of the Spanish-American War and Crane's departure for Cuba.—The Editor.)

THEN suddenly the accident happened. Havana became blood red. The Conquistador and a young stalwart stood up facing each other in rage. The news of war reached England, and the empire-builders watched with supercilious calm the rise of a new world power.

Crane cared nothing about the issues—it was a war, and action. He was restless now. He wanted to get back again to America. With a swiftness that belonged to him, and him alone, he betook himself to Conrad and together they rushed to the London offices of the publishers, trying to secure for Crane an amount of money that would carry him to the war front.

With his skilful pen Conrad tells the story of the "white-faced excitement" of Crane. Blackwood's agreed to carry on, and Crane promised to give them work to pay the debt. The truth was that he probably cared little, perhaps hoped that he would never return. There was a war ahead, perhaps a long one —and, well, England was very far away over there.

In payment he finally wrote *The Price of the Harness,* a tale which Conrad ever after felt was purchased with Crane's blood. But of course, that was not so; it was merely Conrad's fine nature rebelling against the fate that doomed Crane and used Conrad as an unconscious tool to guide his footsteps to Cuba. He would have gone in any case. "Nothing could have held him back. He was ready to swim the ocean."

But what of Cora? She remained, giving up Oxted and moving to Ireland and later to London. To her it was the first of her great moments of terror. She felt slipping from her hands the destiny that she had hoped was to be hers and Crane's in England.

A few days after Crane's departure Conrad wrote her:

Stanford-le-Hope
19 April 1898

My dear Mrs. Crane

We imagine how lonely you must have felt after Stephen's departure. The dear fellow wired me from Queenstown, just before going aboard I suppose. Jess is very concerned about you and wishes me to ask you to drop her a line on your arrival in Ireland. I think your going there would be a good thing as solitude after separation is sometimes very hard to bear.

We thought of asking you to come here at once but on receiving Stephen's wire I imagined

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you were all in Ireland already. However you will be more entertained and more comfortable at the Frederic's for a time, and on your return to England I hope you will have the will and the courage to undertake the risky experiment of coming to us with Mrs. Ruedy. Moreover I fancy Stephen's absence won't be very prolonged and we may have the felicity of seeing you all here together. I trust you will let me know how he fares whenever you hear from him. He is not very likely to write to anyone else—if I know the man.

Jess and Dolly send their very best love to you and Mrs. Ruedy. The baby flourishes exceedingly and its mother is more of a slave than ever. I am as usual ineffective and lazy.

Believe me dear Mrs. Crane your very faithful friend and servant

Jph. Conrad

But the months passed and Stephen remained away. Cuba and the army held him in a viselike grip. He was, in spite of his bad health, roaming and staggering through the career of a war correspondent on a glorious scale. He watched it all and wrote of it in short, wringing sentences. *Wounds in the Rain* and death were the fruits of this eleventh-hour adventure of the keen-eyed youngster who had written:

> A man said to the universe:
> "Sir, I exist!"
> "However," replied the universe,
> "The fact has not created in me
> A sense of obligation."

Cora must have written often to the Conrads. She found in them a great connecting link with the Stephen who was a great artist, on whom her love and ambition rested.

27th June 1898

Dear Mrs. Crane:

I am, we are, horribly ashamed of ourselves for leaving your good and welcome letter so long without a reply. But we reckon upon your generous forgiveness.

I was delighted to hear good news of dear Stephen. The life on board that tug of his will set him up in strength and appetite for years. Have you heard from him since you wrote? I suppose he landed with the army and is in the thick of everything that's going. I've only heard lately he is going to write for Blackwood. They think a lot of him and expect—as well they may—first rate work. Meldrum was here (I suppose you've heard of him? Blackwood's man in London) the other day and spoke [of] Stephen with real enthusiasm. They are anxious but not impatient.

We had a hard time of it. Jess is overworked and we positively *can't* get a decent girl. The pea-pickers are not come yet but are expected in a day or two and my wife is afraid lest they should bring some disease and harm the baby. It is most unlikely tho'.

Garnett told me you had secured a house after your own heart. My congratulations on that and still more on the success of American arms, especially on the exploit of Hobson! That was worth all the Manila battle! Magnificent!

It looks as though the war would drag after all. I think you had better *not* wait for Stephen to return and come to us with Mrs. Ruedy (to whom my respectful duty) *at least* for the promised day and for longer if you can stand it. I am afraid you would get bored, we lead such a wretched, shut-up existence in the most primitive surroundings.

Jessie will write to suggest the time but in reality you must consult your own convenience. The poor girl is doing all the housework, nursing and cooking, herself. She is very cheerful about it but it makes me miserable to see her toiling like this from morning to night. Oh! for a success, a beastly popular success! I long for it on that account. My work goes on desperately slow. I think with difficulty and write without enthusiasm but still the book crawls on towards its lame and impotent end. But the end is not yet. Enough lamentations!

A word as to your health, your doings and your plans would be very welcome. We send you here an amateur photograph of Jess and the baby (doesn't he look like a little pig?) and another of our house—a side view.

My wife and Dolly send their very best love to you and Mrs. Ruedy, and I am, dear Mrs. Crane, Your most obedient and faithful friend and servant

Jph. Conrad

PS I was so pleased to hear my tales are a suc-

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Station: Sandling Junction. from Charg X good train a 11 am and 4.25 pm.
(S.E.R).

Sunday
Pent Farm.
Stanford
Nr Hythe.

Dear Old Pard.

Right. Bully for you. As you are the greatest of the boys — and you are as good as I want you

Jess sends her love to the whole house. Give my affectionate regards and compliments. Let me know the day before when you are coming. You are a dear old chap.

Ever Yours
Conrad.

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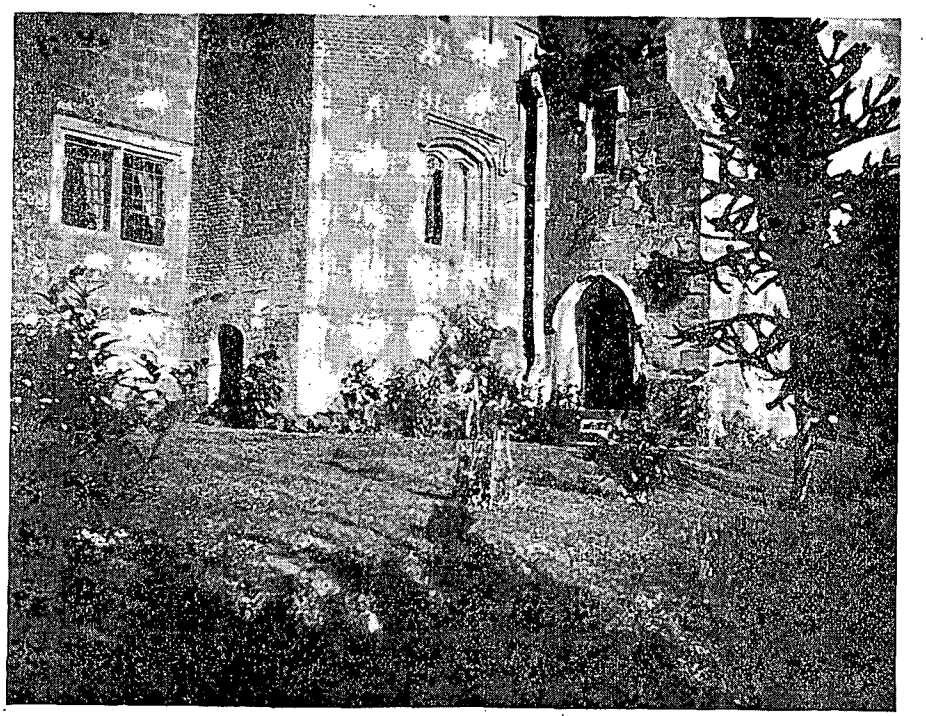
An unpublished snapshot of Stephen Crane, taken at the village of Brede during a flower show. It was on this occasion that Crane "carried pots to the flower show where Henry James helped Edith Richie to sell love potions in a booth and enchanted Crane by a sentence that had easily thirty clauses and nine parentheses".—This is one of Crane's last pictures.

Stephen Crane in England

(Below). A view of Brede Place, Crane's home in England after his return from the war in Cuba.



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cess amongst the socialists of Tennessee. I feel quite proud of it.

Conrad was still at Ivy Walls when he wrote this. He moved to Pent Farm during the next October. Mr. Garnett it was who, as Mr. Beer records, told Cora of the old ruin of ancient legend known as Brede Place. But in spite of Ford Madox Ford, Mr. Garnett was in no wise guilty of hastening Crane's end by thrusting him into a damp medieval fortress. His letters, as yet unpublished, to Mrs. Crane show his kind regard for her and his desire to help her create for Stephen an atmosphere where his art might have full play and no hampering.

Suddenly Cora received news from Cuba that threw her into panic and despair. Crane was not anxious to hurry back in spite of the wreck of his health. He stayed and loitered. Rumor and scandal crept around him again. Cora heard much of it—how? What does that matter? She knew Crane and she knew how dangerous his silences were. She sensed that he was living an instant of freedom; freedom that he was never to enjoy again. She feared for him—perhaps for herself more. He was a man of moods and abrupt hates—and alone over there . . . . ? He might never come back. He might throw overboard everything—he was such a man.

She wrote to the heart of Joseph Conrad.

Pent Farm. Postling.
Stanford Near Hythe,
28th Oct 98

My dear Mrs. Crane

Just a word in haste to tell you I shall try to do what I can. Don't build any hopes on it. It is a *most remote* chance—but it's the only thing I can think of. What kind of trouble is Stephen in? You make me very uneasy. Are you *sure* you can bring him back. I do not doubt your influence mind! but not knowing the circumstances I do not know how far it would be feasible. In Stephen's coming back to England is *salvation* there is no doubt about that.

Will he come? *Can* he come? I am utterly in the dark as to the state of affairs.

We recognize your good heart in your acts. God forbid that we should throw the first—or even the last stone. What the world calls *scandal* does not affect me in the least. My sincere approval and high recognition of the course you've taken is not based on Christian grounds. I do not pretend to that name—not from irreverence but from my exalted idea of that faith's morality. I can't pretend to such morality but I hold that those that *do* pretend and boast of it should *carry it out* at the *cost of personal sacrifice,* and in *every respect.* My admiration of your courageous conduct exists side by side with an utter disapproval of those whom you (in *your* own extremity) befriend. They invoke the name of a Faith and they've dragged its substance pretty well through the mud. It may be only folly—of course—unutterable *folly.* But it looks worse. The only Christian in sight in this whole affair is you my dear Mrs. Crane—exercising that rarest of the Creed's virtues: that of Charity.

I would not have said all this but your good friendly letter, I consider, has in a sense authorized me to speak.

I would of course have done what you wish without a moment's delay but the exact truth is I've only £8 in the bank and am in debt to publishers so heavily that I can't go to them for more. Or else I would do it, believe me. I've tried however to do something but *don't reckon on it* and do not relax your efforts in other directions. I am a poor business man and can't give you any hints as to raising money on life insurance. Couldn't Stokes advise you?

Jess shall write tomorrow. I will let you know shortly (I hope) whether my plan has been of any good. Affectionately and faithfully Yours

Jph. Conrad

Joseph Conrad never failed. Pressed to the wall himself, he went to great lengths to aid these American friends. Here he offers to pawn his time and art:

1st Nov 98

Dear Mrs. Crane

Yours to hand. That's what I'm doing; trying to get at B'wood. I took Mr. Meldrum into our confidence. He is an admirer of Stephen. What you say about your husband is golden truth.

To B'wood I suggested a loan of £50 on three securities. *One* (for which they would care most) *Stephen's work, second* your property,

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third my own undertaking to furnish them copy to the amount advanced should unforeseen circumstances prevent you and Stephen paying him back as soon as he may expect.

We must approach B'wood through Meldrum who is *most* friendly. B'wood himself is a good kind man but must be handled cautiously. It is better done through me and Meldrum. How it will turn out it is impossible to say. It will also require time. I am writing to M. again this post.

Before you give *bill of sale* on furniture *make sure* the furniture dealer or dealers (from whom you bought) are paid *in full* as in the contrary case you would make yourself liable to prosecution. My letter to Stephen is sent through *Reynolds*.

I am sure you are doing and planning for the best. That is the way to rescue poor Stephen. I only wish I had something to pawn or sell; you would not have to wait long for means. As it is I've only my work and that I've offered to B'wood for what it is worth.

Most faithfully yours

Conrad

Jessie sends lots of love. She is very much concerned and anxious about your health.

Something, natural in a man like Conrad, that must not go unrecorded is the fact that nowhere, either in his articles on Crane or letters to friends, does he ever indicate his own intense generosity and kindness. Whenever he is forced to mention something done for Stephen, he does so in a careless fashion, cavalier to himself:

Thursday

Dear Mrs. Crane

I forward you Meldrum's letter. He is a man of good counsel and you can see for yourself that he is anxious to do something. Please read his letter with care. His suggestion is worth consideration. The same ideas occurred to me. If I had the means there would have been no need to mention them, but as you see, if we are to do something we must have recourse to strangers.

I must mention here that the originals of your letters are destroyed and that the whole matter is treated on a perfectly confidential footing. I had to let M. know the exact state of affairs as far as we all on this side are aware of them.

Would Stephen come back by himself if written to? Would he tell us *how much* is wanted to enable him to leave Havana? Would he recognize the engagements we would enter into here for means to bring him back? His future is here—I firmly believe—but will he see it? Whatever happens the matter must be kept quiet, and his reputation shielded. I know of personal knowledge that B'wood is a little angry. A short letter from Stephen saying that he could not send anything would have made all the difference. It is too late now. What do you think of writing him a strong letter urging his return and saying that we keep £50 ready for that purpose if he gives his word. Please write. Always yours

Conrad

But the clouds cleared for a tragic little while. Stephen was writing, but best of all he was coming home—if England was ever his home.

4th Dec 1898

My dear Mrs. Crane

You made us quite happy with your letter. I had a couple of pretty bad days just before; having heard from Meldrum about that wretched ——— you may imagine how sick I felt. I did not write to you at once because I did set to think of some other expedient. I would have gone to London to seek had it not been for my rheumatism which kept me on my back in bed 2 days and even when I got up I could not do more than hobble across the room. I was at my wit's end. Luckily it's over. I dreaded opening your letter, having nothing to propose or suggest. It was immense relief to hear that you had been lucky in some other quarter. Do you think Stephen will be in England before Christmas? His story in *B.* is magnificent. It is the very best thing he has done since the Red Badge—and it has even something that the Red Badge has not—or not so much of. He is maturing. He is expanding. There is more breadth and somehow more substance in this war-picture. We (I had two men visiting me last week) are delighted with this bit of work. It is Stephen all himself—and a little more. It is the very truth of art. There is an added ampleness in his method which makes me augur a magnificent future for

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his coming work. Let him only come—and work!

Excuse me if I end here. I am in arrears with my correspondence—besides other worries. Ah! but I do feel relieved—

Jess sends congratulations and best love.

Believe me always most faithfully yours

Jph Conrad

23/12/98

My dear Mrs. Crane:

You are indeed good and kind to remember us all so charmingly.

Jess was delighted with this proof of your friendliness and as to the boy he simply went mad over the things. For some time he looked with suspicion at the big doll but at last he kissed her and they are great friends now. As to the animals he won't part with them. He persists in saying Moo! to the goat. He takes it for a cow—evidently. I wish you could have given us some news from Stephen. Well, please God you will have your mind and your heart at rest soon. I need not tell you it is the fervent wish of those who live here and however ineffectually, but none the less sincerely take part in your anxieties and hopes. May the Xmas be a season of joy indeed and the new year a year of peace to you. Amen.

Our heartiest and friendliest wishes to the good Auntie Ruedy. We trust to see you all *three* here before the young year has the time to grow old or even middle aged. Let us share in all that befalls you as you have done me the honor to allow me heretofore. I am dear Mrs. Crane your faithful friend and servant

Jph Conrad

With the coming of the New Year Stephen sailed from America, the shores of which he was never to see again. Conrad wrote to him even before he was established at Brede—on the day of his award by the *Academy:*

13 Jan 99

My dear Stephen—

I am more glad than I can say to hear of you being here at last. You haven't lost time in looking up the old *Academy*. I only heard of it today. Thanks very much for your second wire. All this would be damnable bosh but for the 50 gs. which just save me from battering my head against the walls.

I long to hear your news. And let me tell you at once that the *Harness* is the best bit of work you've done (for its size) since the *Red Badge*. There is a mellowness in the vigour of that story that simply delighted me. Several fellows wrote to me about it as soon as it came out. Lucas, Hueffer, Graham and others you don't know. More power to your pen. I feel a new man since this morning's wire. It was good of you to think of me at once. I intended to wire myself today inquiring. Well that's all over now. I mean where to locate you when I think of you—which is often—very. I've been nearly dead and several times quite mad since you left. This is no joke, it is the sober truth I haven't been able to write and felt like cutting my throat. Not a ghost of a notion in my head, not a sentence under the pen. Well. Never mind. It's a little better now. What have you got in *your head?* You must be full of stuff. I suppose the "Dead Man" story will have to wait till you unload your new experience. I know whatever it is it will be *good*. It will be great! You think I might have given a whole sheet of paper for your welcome, but may I be shot if I can find another piece. I am coming to see you directly I finish a rotten thing I am writing for B'wood. It *is* rotten—and I can't help it. All I write is rotten now. I am pretty well decayed myself. I ought to be taken out and flung into a dusthole —along with the dead cats—by heavens! Well. Enough. I don't want to bore you into a faint in your first week in Merry England.

Ever yours

Conrad

30 May 99

My dear Mrs. Crane:

I am afraid we are giving you a certain amount of trouble, but as the milk is—in a way —already spilt—I trust you will not cry—or at any rate not much. Seriously—if I had the cheek to ask about Dolly it was with the idea of saving you the bother about the little girl and under the impression you would have a clear house. Now Dolly knows, it would simply break her heart if she were stopped; moreover this excitable Borys is more likely to be good with her than with a stranger. Would you believe that since you left he has been quite sleepless getting up in the middle of the night to talk about the 'nice man' and the 'Ann-Anns'

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(which means aunties) and generally behaving like a man in the first stages of lunacy.

My letter of yesterday has no doubt reached you by this. If we may we shall come by the train arriving at Rye *11.14 am.* Would Stephen write to some livery stable at Rye for a landau to meet us at that time? and then we can manage. We invade you so early of course on account of the boy the only practicable train in the afternoon arriving only about six.

Jess is sorry your sponge bag has been detained. Mrs. Nash put it away carefully so that we did not even know it was here. It goes by this post.

Unless we hear from you we shall carry out our dreadful purposes as set forth in my two letters.

Jess sends her love. She's too busy to write herself—or says so.

In haste to catch post I am dear Mrs. Crane your affectionate and obedient servant

Conrad

27 Aug 99

Dear Mrs. Crane

I am so sorry Stephen worried about the payment. Thanks ever so much for the cheque—I've sent Hope yesterday £15 in Stephen's name.

A series of visits from Jessie's people has begun. There are now four in the house and this state of things shall last for a fortnight at least. We have put them off till now having lived in hopes of your visit early this month.

Could you come in September—second half? We are extremely sorry to suggest the delay of an event we have been looking forward to with eagerness and delight. Jessie's tearful. She sends her love and would write herself only she is bad with neuralgia. This is the second day of it. I am at work and doing very little as usual.

With affectionate regards from us both

Yours most faithfully

Jph Conrad.

Crane and Conrad saw each other often during the year of 1899. With the coming of the new century, however, Crane became more and more deeply involved in work. He was struggling with panic to get as much done as possible. His health was getting worse. The death-rattle of the artist was in those last things he wrote. This letter of Conrad's, so sincere and fine, must have been written at the close of the year and is the last he sent his dying friend:

Sunday

Dear Old Pard.

Right. Bully for you. You are the greatest of the boys—and you are as good as I want you so you needn't trouble to apologise.

Could you come? You would make me happy—and will you pardon me for not writing to you—Dear Stephen I am like a damned paralyzed mud turtle—I can't move—I can't write—I can't do anything. But I can be wretched, and, by God! I am!

Jess sends her love to the whole house—Give my affectionate regards and compliments. Let me know *the day before* when you are coming. You are a dear old chap.

Ever yours,

Conrad

Some of the very recent discoveries in Craneana include letters from Stephen to Cora. They show momentary flashes of the Crane who wrote *The Black Riders.* They are tender and rich with images. His letters to Conrad may have been similar, though Crane carried into his correspondence little of the flavor of his creative work.

As the days went by Cora attended to more and more of Crane's correspondence. Nearly all the letters that came to Brede were sent to her. She was busy with the Harold Frederic Fund, of which she assumed responsibility. Crane's affection for the unfortunate American and the peculiar aftermath of his death stirred her interest and indignation. Brede Place was always full of people. Some madness drove her to filling the place with visitors who slept on the floor and roughed it in general. Or let us say, with perhaps a deeper understanding of this strange woman, it was a fear of madness, a frantic urge to distract her mind from overmuch contemplation of her impending loss, for she must have foreseen it at this stage. She was a charming hostess, but it was wearing on Crane. There were such short moments to catch one's breath. Conrad and his family

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came again and again, and Crane drove over and spent much time with the master of Pent Farm and Mrs. Conrad and the baby.

A little episode took place at the close of the year that excited much interest in literary circles. *The Ghost* was written by ten collaborators. As remarkable a company as ever joined arms wrote this little play with Crane's home as the scene. Henry James, H. G. Wells, A. E. W. Mason, Rider Haggard, H. B. Marriott Watson, Edwin Pugh, Joseph Conrad, George Gissing, Robert Barr and Crane were the authors. It remains a literary curiosity unrivalled.

The cast included characters that were the familiar creations of the various collaborators. There was a Rufus Coleman out of Crane's *Active Service;* a Suburbia from Pugh's first success; a Doctor Moreau from the fantasy of Wells. The actors included A. E. W. Mason and Mrs. Mark Barr, while Mrs. H. G. Wells (a warm and faithful friend of the Cranes) acted as accompanist. The scene of the play was an empty room in Brede Place in the year 1950. It was a compliment to Crane—this play—from nine of the greatest figures in the writing world of England. Some of them did not know him personally—notably George Gissing, who on Crane's death wrote Cora of his admiration for Crane's works.

The end was coming swiftly, crashingly. Cora wished to take Crane away. He himself was talking vaguely of St. Helena. They were nearly penniless, and pushed to the wall by countless debts and growing difficulties. Futility stalked the heart of Brede Place. Again Conrad was thrown into despair:

10th May 1900

My dear Mrs. Crane

Your letter distresses me beyond measure and confirms my fears as to your material situation. It has been the object of my anxiety and of many sad thoughts. You may imagine that had it been in my power to render you any sort of service I would not have waited for any sort of appeal. I've kept quiet because I feel myself powerless. I am a man without connections, without influence and without means. The daily subsistence is a matter of anxious thought for me. What *can* I do? I am already in debt to my two publishers, in arrears with my work, and know no one who could be of the slightest use. It is not even in my power to jeopardize my own future to serve you. If it had been, such is my affection for Stephen and my admiration of his genius, that I would do so without hesitation, to save him. But my future, such as it is, is already pawned. You can't imagine how much I suffer in writing thus to you. I have been almost distracted since I had your letter. Won't Stephen's relations come forward.

Pardon me for not saying more. I feel too unhappy.

Always yours
Jph. Conrad

PS I am writing to Mr. B——.

Mrs. Conrad wrote Cora as soon as the news of Crane's decline had become known. But neither Conrad nor his wife imagined that the end was so definitely imminent. Mrs. Conrad's strange dream of which she writes, and a broken-hearted letter from Cora told them of the approaching horror.

Sunday

Dear Mrs. Crane—

What awful news you are giving us! And yet people given up by the doctors have been known to live for years.

Of course I will take the boat over. I didn't offer to come near your place knowing myself powerless to help you, nor wishing to bring my barren sympathy and my helpless sorrow only to hinder you who are fighting the battle.

Believe our hearts are with you. May heaven give you strength and the supreme consolation of faith. I can't give you an idea how unhappy I am since I have received your letter.

Always yours
Jph. Conrad

Conrad was ill in the clutch of the Congo disease, but he went to Dover. There he found Stephen with his body wasted and his eyes burning with the last violet flicker of life. He talked with Crane and the latter gasped and struggled his replies. In a whisper

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Stephen murmured of the baby—who was to him the symbol of so much of the sad fascination of life.

As Conrad left the room he turned. But the mind of Crane was already in timelessness. He had moved his head and was gazing with infinite wistfulness upon the inscrutable waters of an alien sea. . . Cora wired them of the end on the fifth of June.

Back in the silence of Brede, Cora kept turning over the vast débris of the art of Stephen Crane that lay on his desk and littered the alcoves. An idea was forming. She would write a life of Stephen—a great work, telling of him, the man she knew. Her past was coming up before her. The years in which she had fought life—her vague triumphs, her vast surrenders. Strange that even Crane's great biographer pays no tribute to the woman who carefully edited the last words and tenderly guided the hectic career of the unfortunate "O'Ruddy". She did this and she turned to writing as a means of support. As pitiful monuments to her efforts stand a score of short stories and sketches. Her characters were shadows of Stephen's. She failed of course. Even her efforts to keep alive the memory of Stephen crumpled before the crassness of the American public.

During this time Mrs. Conrad wrote to her often. Conrad wrote a year later:

24 March 1901

Dear Mrs. Crane—

Jessie must have written you about my gout which absolutely prevents me not only writing but even thinking. I had an extremely bad bout of it, and let this be my excuse for not replying sooner to your kind letter.

I am *so* really and truly glad your work finds space *and* recognition. No news could have been more welcome. As to what you propose, pray believe me when I say that any change as to the disposal of my work in that direction is impossible. I am bound in too many ways, though of that I do not complain. I've found much kindness and even generosity in my difficult way.

You *must* come to us for rest as soon as the weather is a little improved.

Believe me always most faithfully yours,

Jph. Conrad

9 Ap 1901.

Dear Mrs. Crane—

I've been bad again with gout and could not interview the farmer who had stipulated when we first came here that we should not have any dogs. There is upwards of a thousand sheep in the fields around the house and this is the reason he objects to the tenants having dogs. We had a lot of trouble in getting him to admit Escamillo—and a lot of unpleasantness afterwards about sheep and chickens which the dog did chase till we broke him of it. He had a narrow escape from being shot, once or twice.

Moreover our position here is very uncertain. And the truth is, dear Mrs. Crane, it is growing worse. I can't say what we may have to do, where we may have to go! It is the holy truth. And I am afraid we could not take proper care of the dog. Of course if you positively cannot make a satisfactory arrangement anywhere we will try to do our best. But don't you think you will miss the dog awfully yourself? And I fear the dog won't be happy either, away from you.

You must pardon the long delay in reply. Jess has been blind with neuralgia for the last week. It was a wretched time. Believe me always faithfully yours

Jph Conrad

The farmer won't hear of another dog. As I think he wants this house for himself, if I insist he will I fear give Hueffer, who will have to give me, notice. Still—consider us as a last resource. Jessie's best love

During 1902 Cora left England. Her end was not yet. Ten more years. Where did this restless, sensitively ambitious nature find life again? She gambled and diced, heavily, seriously, with that grave daring that had arrested the attention of the burning eyes of Stephen Crane seven years before. . . .

Somewhere behind the blood-red skies Stephen Crane watched and there came that sardonic twisting smile that appeared sometimes and caused men to hate him and women to love him. . . .

THE END

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TENNYSON, THE PERFECT LAUREATE

by John Macy

WHEN in 1892 Tennyson was buried with high ceremony in Westminster Abbey, it seemed to some of our elders that the heart of English poetry had stopped beating. As he wrote of the Duke of Wellington, "The Last great Englishman is low". Like his master, Virgil, Tennyson was *the* poet. The unique identification of the poet laureate with poetry is indicated by a curious sentence in Gosse's pious article in the *Encyclopædia Britannica:* "He was past eighty when he published the collection of new verses entitled *Demeter and Other Poems* (1889), which appeared almost simultaneously with the death of Browning, an event which left Tennyson a solitary figure indeed in poetic literature". Solitary? Our generation can find no meaning in that statement. Swinburne was still alive—Swinburne, a more strikingly original poet and more enchanting lyrist than the official bard. Living, too, was the prolific William Morris, Gothic poet and printer, and *The House of the Wolfings* was at that very hour being beautifully printed at the Chiswick Press. Likewise, there was the unfailing choir of English song birds, invidiously called minor, including for example, Christina Rossetti, who was preparing the collected edition of her exquisite verse. In the view of our fathers, it seems, just as Dickens and Thackeray were the English novel with George Eliot and others as subordinate contributors, so Tennyson and Browning were twin Atlases supporting the world of poetry. When Browning died, Tennyson sustained the weight alone, and when he died the world collapsed.

It is difficult to recover this point of view, but it will be illuminating if we can recover it, go back with a fresh mind to the dawn of Tennyson. To do that, we must rather deliberately set aside some later sophistications and approach him in a state of innocence. For after his death there was a reaction against him or, rather, there was an increasing indifference to him. A personal experience counts for very little, but mine, which included a considerable number of young readers in the 'nineties, is instructive at least to me and may fairly represent the spirit of my time and generation. What were we reading and talking about? Browning, of course, and Swinburne, Rossetti, Morris, FitzGerald, Thomson of *The City of Dreadful Night,* Meredith's *Love in the Valley,* Kipling's *Barrack Room Ballads,* published the year of Tennyson's death, and *The Seven Seas* four years later. We were watching the rising star of a wonderful new poet, Francis Thompson, whom our uncritical youth simply felt to be a supreme poet, a judgment confirmed by maturity and time. We knew about Tennyson, as everybody did, *The Brook* and *The Charge of the Light Brigade* and all that. But we did not read him. We certainly did not read the *Idylls of the King,* except as a task, for we had been

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intoxicated by Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* and had palates for no weaker wine.

This indifference to Tennyson was a mistake and a loss, for we missed a very great poet. To know how great he is and recover the requisite innocence and receptiveness of mind, we must hurdle the years and a good many obstacles. One is Tennyson's enormous reputation; a poet whom, erroneously or not, we value less than other poets from the Elizabethans to Yeats, offends us by his egregious monopoly, his royal letters patent or whatever may be the parchment symbol of his privilege. Another obstacle is the conviction that he is slow, compared with poets that electrify and stimulate us. And he *is* slow; much of his verse has less rapidity and vigor of movement than *Paradise Lost.* It flows like cold molasses, slow and sweet, sweet and slow. Excalibur does not flash, though Tennyson says it does, but wheeling ponderously through the heavy air will never reach the water. Another difficulty, a mere vague prejudice, is the persuasion that this stately poet is trivial, a babbler, that *The Princess* is only an afternoon lawn party at Smith College; that this stalwart Apollo, with the stature of a major-general, is sentimental, lacking in real masculine stuff. But let us overleap these obstacles, cancel a century, and see how the perfect laureate dawned and developed.

Tennyson's first book of verse, *Poems Chiefly Lyrical,* was published in 1830. (The earlier *Poems by Two Brothers,* Alfred and Charles, has only biographical interest.) During the six or eight years before 1830 the flame of English poetry had burnt to the socket and almost flickered out. The blazing day of Keats, Shelley, Byron, Coleridge and young Wordsworth had come swiftly to an end in a sudden tropic night. The younger poets were dead, and Coleridge and Wordsworth might as well have been dead. There were a few more wonderful fruits on Landor's old tree, but he was devoting himself to the *Imaginary Conversations.* The last beautiful poem was Shelley's *Hellas* and the only important verse immediately after that were the last cantos of *Don Juan* that Byron lived to finish. Now upon this brief but deep night breaks a lovely light, not strong, not revolutionary, but clear and unmistakable. There is a new poet in England, chanting, not lisping, the authentic mother tongue of English poetry with a mastery almost as surprisingly precocious as that of Keats. The verses are young and saccharine and undisciplined, but they have the elements of lyric poetry, melody and imagery. They will not bear a too critical rereading; they melt at one bite; there is, however, no doubt of the flavor.

Three years later the young poet confirms his promise in *Poems,* and at that period you may pause as long as you like to welcome and consider the arrival of genius, for here are no juvenilia, but *The Lady of Shalott, The Lotos-Eaters, A Dream of Fair Women* and *The May Queen* with its million-times-quoted first line. Just here we make the first discovery of our rediscovery: Tennyson's early poems have not the ultimate magic of which we never tire, and the fine enchantment that they do possess is weakened by familiarity; we know the lines so well that we take them for granted; the spell is not broken like something false, it is simply dimmed by repetition. The very popularity of Tennyson has paled forever the first blush of surprised delight. The sensuousness of these not too robust lines keeps its savor but not at full s t r e n g t h. The slight graceful b e a u t y of Mendelssohn's *Spring Song* is fiddled almost past its strength to endure. Even greater things cease to impress us if they are a daily experience. (The stranger stands in amazement before Tennyson's own Westminster Abbey—he seems to own everything he has touched; thousands of Englishmen hurry by it every day and never give it a thought.) I have tried to look at these early poems with an unspoiled eye and listen with a virgin ear. Surely a hundred years

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ago anybody except a contributor to the *Quarterly Review* or *Blackwood's Magazine* would have recognized a true poet in the man who wrote:

. . . those melodious bursts that fill
The spacious times of great Elizabeth . . .

would have acknowledged an excellent command of the technique of verse and found necromantic rhythms in *The Lotos-Eaters.* The swooning loveliness of that is not staled by time and long acquaintance.

Tennyson published nothing more for ten years, and then in *Poems,* 1842, announced himself unmistakably as the first of living English poets (Browning was not quite emerging from obscurity with *Pippa Passes* and *Dramatic Lyrics*). In this two-volume collection Tennyson's greatness shows itself in two ways, in the perfection of single pieces and in the diversity of his moods and measures. He is not a poet of a single strain. The shining masterpiece is *Ulysses,* which alone is enough to make the everlasting reputation of a poet. It requires courage for a modern poet to treat a Homeric theme or any classic subject to which the older poetry has given expression once and for all; to risk an annihilating comparison is so temerarious that only a poet magnificently sure of himself will dare it. Dante with perfect assurance puts into the mouth of Ulysses the story of his death (*Inferno,* XXVI). It may be that Tennyson knew Dante, though he seems to have been strangely indifferent to modern continental literatures. There is a certain resemblance (the idea naturally appropriate would occur to any poet independently) between some of Dante's lines and Tennyson's. In Dante Ulysses says:

. . . nor the due love
which should have made Penelope glad
could conquer in me the ardor
which I had to gain experience of the world,
of human vice and of worth.

And Tennyson:

Matched with an aged wife . . .
I cannot rest from travel . . . . .
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known,—cities of men,
And manners, climates, councils, governments.

Tennyson's splendid poem is no mere echo of the ancients but an original offering at old shrines. His more sophisticated readers knew that this young man who was only thirty-three had worn the laurels of the classics before the British Government placed a more modern wreath upon his head. The full strength of Tennyson is in this collection. FitzGerald thought he never surpassed or even equalled it. Certainly all the sides of his genius are manifest here, and in his later work are copiously repeated, marvellously renewed and sustained to the end. The *Morte d'Arthur,* afterward incorporated in the complete *Idylls of the King,* is not excelled by any part of the more mature work. And here are the first and finest of those domestic scenes and ballads, so particularly and uniquely Tennysonian, *The Gardener's Daughter, Lady Clare, Dora, The Lord of Burleigh.*

It was these poems which carried him definitely beyond an intimate circle of appreciative readers to the great British and American public and made him the people's poet, held in the common heart with a reverent affection such as had been bestowed upon no other English poet, not even the admired Shakespeare. Of all English writers only Dickens enjoyed such idolatry during his lifetime. And Tennyson, sensitive to praise and—the obverse—almost morbidly sensitive to disapprobation, throve on his popularity; it was tonic to his immense natural vitality, but it never once led him to condescend to his public or to relax the austerity of his artistic self-discipline.

There was, however, one danger, not in the least his fault. It is unfortunate (if such a thing as misfortune ever came near this darling of the gods) that he became known,

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and is now generally known, not for his most wonderful lines, of whose peculiar magic he was sole sorcerer, but for the feebler and more obvious poems and passages which grow ever thinner with reiterated quotation. For example, in this rich and varied collection of 1842, next to the perfect lyric, *Break, break, break,* the most familiar, the most notorious poem is *Locksley Hall.* And that, I protest, in spite of many excellent lines, is as a whole intolerable. It fails exactly where Tennyson should not fail, exactly where he is almost unrivalled among English poets, in technique. The measure simply drives the auditory system mad. It will do very well for the intentional naïveté of *The May Queen,* but it is strange that Tennyson's almost infallible ear should have permitted him to employ it as a vehicle for the deep emotions of embittered passion and sober reflections on civilization. Those abominable trochees like a woodman sawing wood! Tennyson has little gift, like Browning's, for the colloquial, for the accent of daily speech; and here, as in the even less fortunate sequel sixty years after, he is off the tree-sheltered, flower-strewn path of his genius. The ideas are commonplace, though some of them are ultimately phrased. Since, like Virgil, Tennyson the poet became erected in popular fancy to the office of seer, it was regarded as a marvel that he foresaw the aeroplane—"the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue"—and even the League of Nations—"the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world"! Well, there is nothing miraculously prophetic in that. The dream of world unity is very old. And Leonardo da Vinci seems to have adumbrated the flying machine in the Fifteenth Century before there was even a power engine to suggest it. In point of fact, Tennyson was no prophet either of the future or of his own time; a shy, reserved and conservative man, living upon the classics, upon old legends, and on the nourishing soil and air of the English countryside, he was not widely or wisely aware of contemporaneous events, and war and politics completely bewildered him; current ideas, especially those that were revolutionary, swept round him and left him unshaken like the seas about one of his own mighty crags. He was a dreamer of past, present and future, the poet of the lines that conclude this golden volume:

> And the nightingale thought, 'I have sung many songs,
> But never a one so gay,
> For he sings of what the world will be
> When the years have died away.'

In expression Tennyson was almost always sure of himself; in substance, in choice of theme, he was often wanderingly unsure of himself. He strayed into strange wildernesses to be brought sharply back to his true course by the very sound of his own lyre. His first extended errancy is *The Princess,* and from that aimless journey his natural music does fetch him back to the home road, for what survives is the beauty of the lyric interludes and the musical lines that sing again and again in the rather sterile blank verse. Tennyson's blank verse is the most elevated and melodious after Milton's and on the whole much easier to read. As early as *Œnone* he had shown himself master of this apparently most free, but really most difficult poetic form. But many of his feet are feet of lead, and when there is little to carry, the effect is of great empty boots moving to the music of a grave *largo* in no particular direction; the boots then lack talaria, and they are not capable of seven leagues. In *The Princess* enough excellent verse is expended to make a volume of short pieces, but in the whole single poem *de longue haleine* it is wasted. Not that Tennyson's breath gives out; his lungs are mighty and tireless and his voice is always in good form. But not enough is said to warrant such a sustained utterance, such a voluminous outpouring of rich basso profundo. *The Princess*

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is, if anything, a comedy, and Tennyson was as empty of humor as Browning was full of it. He was a solemn man in his work, however responsive and delightful he may have been when he and the humorist Carlyle were smoking "infinite tobacco" together. He was in fact and in reputation such a serious high priest of poetry that there is something out of key about the poem; the lack of harmony is not in the poem itself, for it is delicately done, but between the poem and the poet, the substance and the style, the stuff and the man. It is somewhat as if Dante had tried to versify a tale appropriate to Boccaccio. Those sweet girl graduates come perilously near to being silly, and this is the one thing, above all, that Tennyson must not be in his own person or in anything he writes. *The Princess* reminds one irresistibly of Calverley's parody of Tennyson, and it is noteworthy that most attempts to parody Tennyson fail utterly because he is too fine to be touched and ridiculed and his very mannerisms elude caricatured imitation.

The whole tedious *Princess* is justified, however, if it needed that long effort to occasion and inspire the lyrics. They are perfect, simply perfect, every one. Recall the first lines and the memory begins to sing for very joy:

As thro' the land at eve we went . . . . . } A miracle of composition, of haunting melody and images that burn on the mental retina.
Sweet and low . . .
The splendour falls on castle walls . . .
Tears, idle tears . . .

O Swallow, Swallow . . } Not the golden god, Swinburne, surpasses that.

Home they brought her warrior dead . . .

Ask me no more . . .

Now sleeps the crimson petal . . .

Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height . . . } A precious jewel in its less than worthy setting.

Then those marvellous last lines that leave you after every reading in a state of ecstatic wonder at what the English language can do when it is shaped by the lips of a master:

. . . and I
Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every sound,
Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet;
Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmuring of innumerable bees.

O lavish muses! A dozen secondary poets could find ample room in the lyric spaces between the groves, albeit artificial groves and lawns, of *The Princess.*

Tennyson returned to his true path, his lonely walk above the sea, in the noblest threnody in the language, save only *Adonais,* which is worlds away from it in mood. *In Memoriam* is, aside from the lyrics, Tennyson's born subject, the best and deepest thing he had to say, and he said it with absolute finality, every stanza, every line; from first to last there is no less than good, less than expressive verse. There is no wavering or uncertainty; the long changing, not always closely related, series of reflections are completely under his control. Whether one thought or another happens to appeal to you is nothing to the point. This is Tennyson himself, heart, soul, mind. And it is Tennyson, the consummate artist. It all runs so easily, the art is so perfectly concealed that even a critical reader can fail to appreciate fully the deftness with which the stanza is varied and turned to the thought and kept from a danger that would have overtaken and ruined it in any other hands, the danger of monotony.

Though not comparable in magnitude and power, Tennyson's management of his stanza, his dexterous adapting of its fixed yet flexible shape to the shape of his thought, is not unlike Dante's multifarious use of the

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terza rima. Tennyson himself spoke of *In Memoriam* as a sort of *Divine Comedy* beginning in lamentation and ending in the triumph of love. But indeed it has no such organic coherence from beginning to end; it is a series of loosely connected sections, moods, ideas without clear consecutiveness or close continuity. It is a miscellany, a repository for many thoughts that came to Tennyson at different times, more or less apropos of the death of Hallam, but all intensely and intimately apropos of himself. The beauty of it is not in any perfect completeness but in the perfection of its parts, section for section, stanza for stanza. Long bridge-like construction was not within Tennyson's power, here or in the *Idylls* or the dramas. It is impossible to enjoy *In Memoriam* by reading it through at one long run; indeed, that is the way to invite the danger which it skilfully avoids if it is not pressed too hard, tedium and monotony. It is better to anthologize it for yourself as you go, pick and savor choice stanzas and phrases. The number of them is amazing. One is tempted to quote a score of them, not always those most often quoted like the "somehow good" stanza.

After a thorough immersion in *In Memoriam* you will find yourself exclaiming with Tennyson's friend and most popular contemporary, Dickens: "What a pleasure it is to read a man who can write!" The emotional effect of *In Memoriam* is very slight; it is not, as *Adonais* is, incandescent with passion, a genuine wail of sorrow. It is reflective, the burning sense of loss has cooled and the aching heart has relaxed in tranquillity. The heart is there, honest and manly, and above all "man's incomparable mind". What remains imperishable is the true Tennyson, a lyric poet, an almost flawless artist in phrase and rhythm, rich in metaphors that strike, now one, now another of the five senses. In these high and rare gifts Tennyson is supreme, among the great of all ages and inferior only to those who could carry a mighty idea through to a mighty conclusion.

When Wordsworth died in 1850, Victoria appointed Tennyson poet laureate, and two years later, in the *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington,* England found that she had an official poet who took his responsibilities seriously and who on state occasions wrote at least good verse and not perfunctory paltry rhymes. Of all poets who had held the office or some half formal position corresponding to it since Ben Jonson, Tennyson was the most fitting incumbent; he was *the* Poet Laureate. Some of his predecessors were absurdly obscure or unpoetic. Dryden, of course, was worthy, and so were Southey and Wordsworth. But they did little or nothing in the way of official celebrations, Wordsworth stipulating when he accepted the office that no formal verse should be required of him. Tennyson was born and bred to wear the court wreath, appointed from his cradle by the island God of England for the honor and the task. The *Ode* on the Great Duke is a manful piece of work, dignified and in high heroic vein, restrained by the poet's fine taste from pomposity and fustian. Tennyson was a sincere patriot, a Briton through and through, and as provincial as Gladstone. After the *Ode* his next official or public and patriotic poems are disasters. One is a fearful piece of rhymed journalism, *The Third of February,* which contains the extraordinarily insolent lines:

> No little German state are we,
> But the one voice in Europe [!]

The other is *The Charge of the Light Brigade,* which is the lowest doggerel balderdash to which Tennyson ever fell, with its perverted notion of heroism, its degraded conception of the soldier's duty:

> Theirs not to make reply,
> Theirs not to reason why,
> Theirs but to do and die.

That is an exact account of what soldiers are required to do. The terrible thing is

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that Tennyson approves and celebrates it. There is nothing so dreadful in British snare-drum verse until the arrival of Kipling. To Tennyson's later patriotic poems, *The Revenge* and *The Defence of Lucknow,* there can be no objection, even if they fail to stir the enthusiasm of a non-British reader; they are spirited and virile, in the good old *Rule, Britannia* tradition.

Tennyson's spirit is prevailingly serene and reflective, and his song, though often sad, is without tragic heart-break; he is not a master of passion, either the hot, concentrated cry of agony or the grand passions. In *Maud* he rises to his most intense emotional pitch; it is his strongest flight and, curiously enough, it did not please the ever-increasing and ever more adoring public which he had taught, won, created. The title is unfortunate, for Maud, the unloveliest of female names, suggests a flimsy girl in muslin and the subtitle, "A Monodrama", is a misnomer. It is a narrative in a series of poems, chiefly lyrical. The lyric muse who watched over Tennyson for sixty years was repeatedly calling him back to the natural ways of his genius. *Maud* is dramatic only in that it contains a tragic situation, murder, romantic melodrama, and a wide sweep of feeling; it is the most moving of Tennyson's narratives. It succeeds when the emotion throbs in lyric rhythms, and it fails when his rhythms fail and an effort at realism pushes him to the precipice of prose.

> . . . his honest fame should at least by me be maintained;
> But that old man, now lord of the broad estate and the Hall,
> Dropt off gorged from a scheme that had left us flaccid and drain'd . . .

—that does not sound like Tennyson at all; it is indeed very bad verse. His attempts at the colloquial are better here than in *Locksley Hall,* partly because of a less monotonous, more varied and conversational measure. The passage beginning, "But a cold and clear-cut face", is a physical portrait, visual, in three dimensions; words have seldom achieved anything more ocular and graphic. For this is Tennyson's great gift, to keep the eye and the ear active at the same time; no other poet has just that combination, that almost continuous two-fold appeal, to such a great degree through so many poems. In melodious description, sung pictures, he is at his best, and there is, of its kind, nothing better. When he tries to strike the diurnal tone of life, to dramatize actuality, the muses usually look the other way and give him up with a more numbing despair than did his friends FitzGerald and Carlyle after *The Princess.* Even in his domestic idylls he is essentially romantic and lyric. In *Maud,* years before his younger contemporaries, Tennyson wrote a kind of voluptuous, languorously sensual line which we think of as belonging to what was brutally miscalled the "fleshly school" of poetry. I suspect that many a young reader of poetry who has neglected Tennyson would confidently identify as Swinburne's such a line as this from *Maud:*

> You have but fed on the roses and lain in the lilies of life.

With a little combing out of the ephemeral dust of realism (hustings and the votes and such trivia) and of the kinks of confused meditations (no doubt appropriate to the character of the youth who speaks!) the locks of this poem would fly golden and glorious in the windy rush of it—it would be a masterpiece. As it is, the rich things must be picked out and the pinchbeck and slag forgotten by selective criticism. The marvellous bridal song (Section XXII) never to be fulfilled; "Come into the garden, Maud", not trite by seventy years of repetition; the sombre and shivery "Dead, long dead", these are the singular, solitary voice of Tennyson; no other man ever wrote or could have written anything quite like it.

Yet for once the British public liked him not, and he retired in a kind of surly pique to study the Arthurian legends, which he

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had touched in the early *Morte d'Arthur* and which were to engage him intermittently until the publication of *Balin and Balan* in 1886. Tennyson's conception of the character of Arthur is an exquisite piece of English provincialism and insularity, so respectably Victorian—those dull words are the only words for this dull performance—as to verge on the comic and almost to justify Lytton Strachey's wicked caricature of the age. The primitive Arthur, historic or legendary, was a Celt, with his sword honed for anything that looked like a Saxon. As he grew into a figure of romance and chivalry under the hands of French poets and prose romancers, he and his knights became French in manners and mode of speech, retaining somewhat of the original barbaric elements. The legends are anybody's property to be made over and interpreted according to the fancy of the poet. Even Mr. Edwin Arlington Robinson may, if it please him, run the risk of coming a cropper by mounting Tristram's horse again. But there is in the old legends a color, tone, flavor, which a true medievalist will preserve and revive. Tennyson often bleaches the originals to an unbelievable pallor. He is so English that he misses the fine, free, pagan spirit of French chivalry; his Arthur almost belongs to the Anglican Church. And as for the Celtic elements that still linger in the medieval romances, he has not a shadow of a notion what Celtic is. In another place he is guilty of the atrocious lines:

> Of freedom in her regal seat,
> Of England; not the schoolboy heat,
> The blind hysterics of the Celt.

Even in the really splendid *The Voyage of Maeldune* he has made at best a swinging English ballad; he has washed the Irish out of it in the waters off the Isle of Wight. He would not have understood Arnold's interracially sympathetic essay on Celtic literature, with the delightfully humorous introduction in which Sweetness-and-Light shakes its head with a sad amused smile over the Englishman's self-imposed estrangement from the Celtic members of the United Kingdom.

If Tennyson's Arthur were a noble Englishman, like Shakespeare's Henry V, or Sidney, or Drake, or Raleigh, or even the Duke of Wellington, he would be tolerable, admirable. But he is a prig, so virtuous that the best of his knights are better men than he. His character fades in the light of his own moral halo, his blameless, unblemished, unheroic heroism. The *Dedication,* written after the character of Arthur was shaped in Tennyson's mind and most of the *Idylls* were written or planned, is a most unhappy conception—the identification of Arthur with Albert the Good, the appalling idea that the Prince Consort held the *Idylls* dear,

> Perchance as finding there unconsciously
> Some image of himself.

After that it is impossible to dissociate the king of romance from the actual Nineteenth Century prince; there is always a "Prince Albert" coat over Arthur's armor, and his plumed helmet dissolves, to be replaced grotesquely by a silk hat. Victoria's husband was a fine man. After Strachey's shrewd biography, the finest kind of caricature with the lines ever so subtly off the lines of accurate portraiture, we begin to like Albert heartily and to rejoice in young Victoria's adoration of a loyal, honest man. But it was fatal to Arthurize him, and more fatal to Albertize the captain of the Round Table. Tennyson's Arthur is too highly civilized, too sophisticated, for all his childish stupidity. His lecture to Guinevere, in which he rehearses his career, his deeds and virtues, is a fearful dose. Guinevere would have been justified in turning away from such a solemn ass to any really bold knight, even to Dagonet, the humorless humorist. Better half a night with Lancelot than a cycle with the king. And when it comes to preaching, Arthur's house is Prince Albert's own Crystal Palace. For he has been a sinner himself,

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though Tennyson ignores this, much to Swinburne's disgust. Modred is Arthur's son by his sister; the incest motive is plain in the legend, though it has not quite the Greek turn and emphasis that Swinburne would give it—Swinburne, drenched in Greek and a much better medievalist than Tennyson. The destruction of Arthur and his court at the hands of Modred is, therefore, tragic, poetic justice, which a Greek at least would have understood and of which Tennyson was as naïvely unaware—so far as we can judge from his poetry—as his royal mistress. His Arthur is not a perversion or distortion of an established character, for in the legends Arthur is always shadowy, and his greatness is asserted generally rather than shown in action.

The bravest exploits all have as their heroes the favorite knights, Lancelot, Gawain, Tristram. Percivale, real men, not—God be praised!—"stamped with the image of the king". The best character in the *Idylls* is Lancelot; and Tennyson, try as he might, could not well avoid making a man of him, for he comes out of the legends rich with adventure, almost with a definite personality, though all these legends deal with action and are indifferent to character except in the general terms of the obvious virtues and vices. The best of the *Idylls,* except the really fine death scene, are those in which Arthur does not appear or appears only casually. The prettiest of all is *Lancelot and Elaine,* for there Tennyson is at home, in lyric romance, a sweet and lovely story, which gives him opportunity to exercise his fine gifts, melodious lines in gentle, melancholy harmonies and rich descriptive effects. That black barge is unforgettable; here, indeed, is tapestry from which the colors are not faded but in which they are renewed by a master of color and design. One can imagine William Morris going wild over that Idyll and wishing at once to decorate it and print it in black-letter. And the whole thing sings; the opening lines suggest that the poem be recited to music or, rather, that it is its own music:

> Elaine the fair, Elaine the lovable,
> Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat.

Only a magician can work the spell of this poem, create the very air and water. We must bow to a great poet whose head is high above smart ridicule and whose feet are firm even when the ground is shaken by fundamental criticism. Equally charming is *Geraint and Enid.* And there are authentic wizardry and witchcraft, eerie bedevilments and forest mysteries in *Merlin and Vivien.* There is the never-failing power of description. You see Merlin forever after you have read:

> He dragg'd his eyebrow bushes down, and made
> A snowy penthouse for his hollow eyes.

Tennyson fails in the accounts of high adventures and simple doughty deeds. Perhaps his sources were a drag upon him, for the medieval romances take endless pages to get through one fight. His difficulty seems to be not in the selection of details, the sequence of events, the progress of action, but rather in the quality of his blank verse, its lack of *élan,* verve, gusto; its very dignity and majesty impede it. You read:

> The sudden trumpet sounded as in a dream
> To ears but half-awaked, then one low roll
> Of autumn thunder, and the jousts began:
> And ever the wind blew, and yellowing leaf
> And gloom and gleam, and shower and shorn plume
> Went down it.

That is sonorous, resonant verse, but the pace is so deliberate that at such a rate nothing would begin all day. The lines are from *The Last Tournament,* and perhaps a weary die-away effect is intended, but almost all Tennyson's narrative blank verse, clear, soundly made, managed by a man who knew every corner of the palace of art and the work-shop of art, strides but does not always advance, sometimes treads cumber-

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somely on its own feet. Stumbling is not the word for it; Tennyson was too sure, too solidly poised and balanced to stumble, and there are too many lovely images by the way for the reader to feel a sense of tedium or impatience. But for some reason, past analysis, Tennyson simply does not get on. In great narrative verse, Chaucer, for example, there is a swift leap from line to line, so that you are at the end of the poem before you know it. That energetic, locomotive quality Tennyson does not possess.

The Last Tournament is in substance the least satisfactory of the *Idylls,* and lovers of the Tristan story, those especially whom Wagner and great singers have made drunk, have resented the Laureate's treatment of the greatest lover among all the knights, not excepting Lancelot, whose intrigue with the queen is a backstairs affair. Is that the best a great poet can do with Tristram? Must he be so shy and inept in the face of a great passion, in the presence of a great lover? Even the reserved and wan Arnold did better than that, and of course Swinburne did brilliantly better. Tennyson has knocked all the heart and fire out of the story, makes Tristram gross, Mark utterly contemptible, and does not even hint at Tristram and Isolt as helpless victims of a passion induced by the fatal potion. The talk between Tristram and Isolt is banal as a witless he-and-she comedy. Tristram's death at the hands of Mark, as Tennyson invents it, is shockingly crude; Tristram dies in no such cheap melodramatic fashion, but wounded by a poisoned arrow, waits for the white sail that shall announce the coming of his Queen and when, through error or the jealousy of the other Isolt, he hears that the sail is black, he thinks he shall never see the Queen again and dies in despair; and she, arriving too late, dies upon his breast. Tennyson misses all that poetry. In a word he has vulgarized a beautiful story, either because he could not comprehend it or because he had not seen the best versions of it, such as that by the German poet, Gottfried von Strassburg and his continuators, the source of Wagner's dignified text. To take the taste of Tennyson's coarse sugar out of the mouth, the English reader can now turn to a recent translation of Joseph Bédier's exquisite version in modern French prose.

The death of Arthur is noble; it encloses in a later setting the first pure jewel from the volume of 1842; the later inspiration flags somewhat, but the solemn conclusion is impressive and that reluctant barge does finally disappear.

The central legend of all, the story of *The Holy Grail,* Tennyson treats with lofty many-colored splendor; the mysticism and mystery of the subject are well suited to his genius. The miraculous talisman glows in these beautiful verses with a heavenly radiance. The decorative opulence, a superb example of Tennyson's pictorial sense of words, suggests the flaming frescoes of Edwin Abbey in the Boston Public Library. Words like these hold the translucent glory of stained glass and the music of a cathedral organ:

> O never harp nor horn
> Nor aught we blow with breath, or touch with hand,
> Was like that music as it came; and then
> Stream'd thro' my cell a cold and silver beam,
> And down the long beam stole the Holy Grail,
> Rose-red with beatings in it, as if alive,
> Till all the white walls of my cell were dyed
> With rosy colors leaping on the wall;
> And then the music faded, and the Grail
> Past, and the beam decay'd and from the walls
> The rosy quiverings died into the night.

Throughout Percivale's story there is in the very delay, the brooding wonder of the verse, a feeling of the difficulty of the quest, of heavy wandering through a stricken fairyland of visions and phantoms, strange lights and baffling darkness.

In *Enoch Arden,* written in one of the long intervals between the composition of the Arthurian Idylls, Tennyson returns to

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earth. It is a romantic novelette in verse, the best straight narrative in all the Laureate's work, a remarkably good story and, so far as seems to be known, his own invention. Whenever, as sometimes happens—there were several cases reported in the years of confusion following the World War—a long absent husband returns to find his wife married again, the newspapers always refer to Enoch Arden, and the whole English-reading world understands the allusion. It is the best in plot of the many domestic scenes and homely balladry in which Tennyson touched the common life of England, a note he had struck in his earlier poems and repeated often in successive collections, in the Queen's English, as *Aylmer's Field, The Brook, Sea Dreams* and, in dialect, the *Northern Farmer, Owd Roä, The Northern Cobbler* and *The Village Wife*. Partly on account of its length, which indeed the substance fully justifies, *Enoch Arden* shows something of that non-narrative quality of which I have spoken, a retardation, almost a sluggishness of movement, which the interest, the genuine value of the material do not quite overcome. It is much a matter of phrasing, of too big words and too sonorous locutions for simple things, which make Tennyson's voice in this *genre* less plainly and directly human than Wordsworth's. "Enoch's ocean-spoil in ôcean-smelling osier" is a long way round a fisherman's basket. Tennyson, with his vast resources of vocabulary, is often too literary not only for the general public but for his most attentive, critical reader, yet he is capable, especially in his songs, of perfect simplicity, of living up to his own lines on Wellington:

> And, as the greatest only are,
> In his simplicity sublime.

Tennyson's full-throated, orotund eloquence is magnificent in its place and often carries him to Miltonic, Virgilian heights; but the weak side of his literary virtuosity, his rhetorical amplitude (emphatically not affectation, for it was as natural to him as English air), swelling and overwhelming the *vox humana,* makes impotent his experiments in poetic drama. For many mature years he stubbornly persisted in writing poetic plays, which are not easy to read and which failed on the stage in spite of good actors and a public predisposed to applaud the great poet. The best, *Becket,* finally succeeded after Tennyson was dead. Two or three of the plays, notably *Harold,* are good stories, and they are clear enough, for Tennyson was never guilty of obscurity in any form or with the most misty and intangible subjects. They simply sag for lack of action and from weight of phrase. It is difficult to say what the balance is between dramatic progress and poetic declamation and embellishment. Shakespeare is prodigal of magniloquent rhetoric. Could anything, in the light of common sense, human nature, and the given situation, be more incredible, more downright impossible, than Macbeth's speech after the murder—"Macbeth does murder sleep"? Then follow six splendid metaphors, a veritable lyric on sleep. Yet somehow it goes—because it is so beautiful or we are so familiar with it?—and seems in keeping with the scene, essential to it, exactly in place, though no man fresh from a murder will pause for such finely imagined thoughts, nor for that matter, of course, speak poetry at all. And somehow Tennyson's fine passages, even the most lean and sinewy of them, do not go as spoken drama or as a delight under one's reading lamp. These plays occupy more than one fourth of all the volumes of Tennyson, but they are little better than—his own line to Macready—"those gilt gauds men-children swarm to see". The men-children did not swarm to him, and they were right, though some excellent verses —for Tennyson *was* a poet—are buried in this heap of failures.

In spite of and in the midst of his obstinate and unfortunate wooing of the dramatic muse, his own true muse rescued him, as

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always, and in the amazing last twelve years of his life he produced no less than six collections of lyric verse, one posthumously published. Only Goethe poured out for so many years such a volume of fresh song in a voice that never cracked from senility. Think what that final decade includes: *Rizpah, The First Quarrel,* which have something of the tragic *speaking* human voice that the plays generally lack; *Tiresias* and *Demeter,* on classic subjects and worthy of his well loved and deep studied classics; then, as if his romantic fancy would put a girdle round the world, *Akbar's Dream,* on the great Mogul emperor who sought the good in all religions, and *Kapiolani,* the Hawaiian princess; finally, to round his life out with poetic completeness, the lovely swan song, *Crossing the Bar.* Though Tennyson was reserved and personally, though not professionally, modest (he had a right to be proud!), he was always somewhat statuesque and histrionic in act and appearance, august, impressive, lordly. His death is a picturesque, a spectacular climax. He dies in the moonlight, his hand clasping a volume of Shakespeare, open at *Cymbeline.* O perfect Laureate! At what page of *Cymbeline?* Perhaps at the passage that runs:

Promises Britain peace and plenty.

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DRAMA, WHAT BIG TEETH YOU HAVE!

AN INEXACT SUMMARY OF THE THEATRICAL SEASON JUST ENDED

by Robert Benchley

In summing up what has been called "the worst dramatic season since that of John Wilkes Booth" (the quotation marks are mine) it must be remembered that by "worst" is meant "financially worst". It must also be remembered (that makes *two* things that you must remember) that by "financially worst" is meant "financially worst for certain managers". If you had enough *aplomb* to go up and ask William A. Brady, Sr., or Arthur Hopkins—or Charles Hopkins if you can find him—or either Mr. Schwab or Mr. Mandel or even (tipping your hat) Miss Le Gallienne, you would be told that it had been a perfectly dandy season. And this would be because all of these managers have put on good shows which the public liked.

Of course, in saying this I have summed up the entire season in one paragraph, and ought, by rights, to end the article at this point. That, however, would look very silly on the page.

There is one thing which I have not seen brought out in other reviews of the season (probably because I have read none of them) and that is that there were no plays dealing with dendropholism. Dendropholism, as I hope none of you know, is that form of pathological love in which the subject is illicitly attracted to trees. I think that I need go no farther into this subject other than to say that our drama has been particularly free from it this season. We have had almost every other form of love treated in one way or another (usually one way), but trees have, more or less, been left out of it. Does this mean a reversion to Victorian standards? Does it mean that the pendulum has started swinging the other way? You may answer either question, taking not more than ten minutes for each.

Owing to a superficial ailment in my knee (known to jocose surgeons as "knee-mouse") I stopped going to the theatre professionally late in March. For that reason, I am particularly unfitted to write a résumé of the season at this time, as a great many of the dramatic hits have been produced since that date and I wouldn't go to see them now on a bet. On opening nights I often put on my pajamas at eight-thirty and creep into bed, dozing and dreaming of my erstwhile colleagues, tossing and turning in uncomfortable theatre chairs until eleven, not getting enough sleep to keep a bird alive. And then, at eleven, I get up and take a shower and, immaculately dressed, go out to meet them with sparkling eyes and ask them, "How was it?" Sometimes they just look at me accusingly; other times, they lend me a dollar and we drink to the old days.

But enough of this sentimental maundering! I saw a sufficient amount of the season up to the end of March to recognize the trend that the theatre is taking and to look ahead to next season and foretell what it will bring. And, I assure you, in making this forecast I shall not forget the menace of the

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talking movies. I shall not forget because I am trying to curry favor with the talking movies myself, and a sycophant never forgets.

The outstanding feature in the drama of the past season has been the elimination of mimosa as piano decoration. Ever since 1922, when *The Truth About Blayds* was produced at the Booth Theatre with a vase of mimosa on the piano, our entire dramatic scheme has been dominated by this yellow blossom. No scene could be written, no climax could be contrived which did not fit in with mimosa, because it was a foregone conclusion that somewhere in the set there would be a vivid dash of cheery pigment thrusting its way into the story. It is said that, as late as 1928, a certain manuscript by a well-known Russian was turned down because it called for three scenes in a malt-vat where mimosa would be out of place. But in the fall of 1928 the managers took the matter into their own hands. At a meeting of the Protective Managers Association on November tenth, representatives of the scenic artists were told that, willy-nilly and higgledy-piggledy, there was to be no more mimosa in the *décors*. The scenic artists lay down on the floor and kicked and screamed and said that the managers could get their sets henceforth from Cain's storehouse or a lot of old high schools, but it did no good. Mimosa was out. Perhaps that had something to do with the slump in the season. A lot of people had got to like mimosa on pianos and when it failed to appear they took up with the talking movies.

Of course, the menace to the Drama from the talking movies depends on several things. It presupposes, in the first place, a reversion of the public mind to that point in the Stone Age when it was fooled by rock-carvings of little birds seated on the back of a rhinoceros. (Perhaps you haven't seen those photographs of Stone Age discoveries in the *Illustrated London News*. They make you stop and think.) The public, in order to get the full kick out of a talking movie, must discard all that it has ever learned about physics (the work of perhaps ten seconds) and must adjust itself to the idea that sound is not set in motion by anything in particular and that it travels over no set route on its way to the tympanum. It must also forget all that it has ever taken in from watching real people on the stage and must take it for granted, as Plato said so badly, that what we know as Reality is really nothing but the Shadow on the Wall of a Cave. Add to this the fact that the Shadow on the Wall of the Cave is giving forth sounds which seem to come from somewhere under the Cave Floor, and you have the Idea, or Ultimate Good, on which the talking movies must depend.

Now, the Public will stand for almost anything. I say this because the Public *has* stood for almost anything. But for a new medium of entertainment to expect to become a menace in six months, basing its hope on a complete demolition of the public consciousness and the elimination of its nerve-centers, is as sanguine as for me to expect to fool the Court of St. James's by walking in and saying that I am Charles Dawes—even if I were to wear a beard. The legitimate theatre has at least another year to go before it is completely wiped out by William Fox.

Since this is so—and I have no confidence that I have proved that it is—let us look over the field and see what the future has in store for the theatre. I am not very crazy about doing this, and I doubt very much if you want to have me; so we will make it as short as possible.

In the first place, there will probably be no more revivals of old-time melodramas. This will leave Messrs. Morley, Throckmorton, Gribble, Cadwalader and Taft with a theatre and lots of beer in Hoboken on their hands. I am basing my theory that an end to this sort of revival will come on the well-established fact that I, personally, am going to see that each audience is blown to atoms as it enters the theatre where such a

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revival is taking place. No such aggregation of noisy louts should ever be allowed to gather in one place as those who congregate each night to stamp and hiss and cheer the performance of *After Dark* or any one of the other revivals in which there is a villain. I should say that civilization had been retarded by two thousand years through these revivals and the infantilism they have aroused in adult audiences. The fact that neighboring beer-sources may have something to do with this nightly display of animal spirits is no excuse. Drunk or sober, no people as far advanced from the marmoset as we are supposed to be have any right to behave in such fashion without automatically relinquishing their right to wear long trousers or earrings. (Interesting marginal note by author: In casting about in my mind for some article of clothing which grown-up women wear as opposed to those worn by little girls, I could think of nothing but earrings.)

I have, therefore, arranged with the Du Pont Powder Company to keep supplied a device of my own which will destroy, beyond all hope of repair, any and all audiences who attend revivals for the purpose of hissing and cheering and stamping. This will naturally eliminate the revivals in time, and it is on this that I base my prediction for next season.

In the cultural theatre, I predict that Walter Hampden will open his season with a poetic translation from the Arabic in which he will appear in a series of robes and turbans and recite great stretches of words in a rich voice. This will be quickly followed by a revival of *Cyrano de Bergerac* which will last the entire season.

If Eugene O'Neill finishes his other two plays which are to form the trilogy of which *Dynamo* was the unimpressive opener, the Theatre Guild will produce them, but only after careful copy-reading and conference, and with a couple of plays by Shaw and S. N. Behrman in reserve to follow immediately as chasers.

There will be eleven imitations of *Journey's End,* all of them terrible flops.

Mr. Belasco will retire from active production as a preliminary to producing an ambitious spectacle on which he has "no chance of making any money".

Margaret Anglin will appear in a play selected from the Walter Baker Company's list of "Entertainments for Young and Old".

William A. Brady, Sr., crazed with his success as a Pulitzer Prize producer will plunge into something so high-class that it will lose him all the money he has made on *Street Scene.*

There will be an illegitimate baby in nine out of ten comedies.

Ethel Barrymore will try two more plays in her repertoire and will then join the Theatre Guild permanent company.

Three unimportant plays, which nobody knows have even opened, will run the entire season.

Having renounced dramatic reviewing for the talkies, I shall be reviewing plays again.

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THEME WITH VARIATIONS

by Clarkson Crane

She looked in the glass at her tear-reddened eyes, dabbed at them again with a handkerchief, then got up and crossed the room, with her blue wrapper trailing around her, and opened the door gradually. The hall was dark, but at the other end there was a glow from a light half way down the staircase. From the living room below, where the rest of the family was gathered, came the blare of a radio emitting jazz. While she listened, the selection ended and immediately the announcer uttered words that sounded like *Yaa, ya, ngaa, ngaa.* Then, after a pause, the music began again.

Now and then she heard her young brother's voice, occasionally her mother's, and once her father called from the dining room, where he had gone after supper to read his paper: "It's about time to get that lecture now, isn't it, Robbie?" "Aw, no, Pa!" An hour before Robbie had knocked on her door and said: "Violet, Ma wants to know if you'd like anything to eat". She had been lying prone on the bed. Lifting her face, she had replied: "No, never mind". Now she felt hungry, but no one thought of her, no one down there cared at all: she might starve to death and they'd know nothing of it.

Stepping back into the room, she closed the door as softly as possible, returned to the chair before her bureau and again looked at herself in the glass. Her eyes and nose were red, her blonde hair matted over her forehead. She began to comb it out, snuffling once or twice. The wide sleeve of her wrapper fell away from her arm. She could see the reflection of her note-book and tattered shorthand manual, which were lying on the floor where she had dropped them on coming in late that afternoon. All the way home in the car she had cried softly, mopping her eyes, unable to regain control of herself after the sudden hysterical outburst of weeping at four o'clock, when the time of the examination was up and she had been able to get out only seven of the ten letters dictated before noon. "Seven" was just passing, and she hadn't had time to check them and there certainly would be at least one mistake to keep her from getting by. Crumpled up over the typewriter, beneath the big photograph of Mount Shasta that had loomed above her for three hours, she had let tears fall unchecked on the sheets of carbon paper.

"Now, Violet," the girl next to her had said, "don't take on so. It's not as important as all that."

"It is!" she had exclaimed, stamping her foot under the bench.

Sitting in her own room, before the mirror, she could not drive the photograph of Mount Shasta from her mind. When she remembered the first mistake she had made, the picture rose before her, with the snow on top and the brass name plate on the black frame. There it had been when she struck the wrong key half-way through a letter she was rewriting for the third time and, when every-

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thing was over and she felt sure she had failed and must spend at least two more weeks in the Western Secretarial School, the nasty mountain had been staring down at her, with an automobile and some tiny men at the base among pine trees.

She glanced at her wrist: it was bare, and she found her watch on the carpet under the bed. Seven-thirty. More than an hour had passed since the end of supper. At eight o'clock Bruce would come. It was all his fault. She wouldn't see him. Laying down her comb, she wiped out the corners of her eyes, then opened the door again and, after hearing the radio, went on tiptoe to the bathroom and shut herself in quietly. She did not want the family to hear her moving about, for they might think she was getting ready to receive Bruce and that would make Robbie laugh and say: "Oh, don't mind Violet when she cries. She'll be all right in a minute. Just send for a man". The thought of his saying this made her weep again momentarily, but she washed her face in cold water and after a while the redness and swelling began to go away.

If Bruce hadn't been such a goof the evening before, she wouldn't have been nervous that morning and would probably have finished all ten of the letters. She had taken them down perfectly and had been able to read back her notes, but as soon as she was before the machine something had gone wrong. "Examinations are unfair anyway," she thought, holding the wash rag against her face. "Especially in typing. It's just a question of nerves." Bruce was so stubborn. "I've never known so stubborn a fellow." Now she was hungry, but she couldn't go down and get anything because that would make them glance up and kind of laugh. Pa was probably listening to the lecture, something about gardening, and Ma, having finished the dishes, would be looking at the pictures in the tabloid. They could tell Bruce she had a headache or something and he could just sit there and listen to the radio. When the lecture was over, Robbie would turn back to a station that had jazz.

She folded the wash rag into a limp square, held it under the cold water faucet, then pressed it against her right eye. A few drops ran up her arm. On the glass shelf over the bowl stood an open bottle of the stuff Robbie put on his hair to keep it down; near it lay Pa's safety razor. He had lost the case long ago and for about a month had gone around the house saying: "I'd like to know who took the case to my razor". Violet wiped her elbow. Against the wall hung four toothbrushes and two or three crushed tubes exuded paste onto the shelf. Bruce always smelt of tobacco. The evening before, all the way home from the movie, they had argued about smoking. "Well, Violet, all you have to do is to smoke a little more yourself. Then you won't notice it." "Well, I don't see why I have to do it just because you do it." "Aw, Violet!" "Well, I don't care!" After which there had come a long silence.

She had not let him kiss her good-night: it served him right; now in the bathroom, still weeping a little, she was glad she had sent him away like that. "I won't kiss him unless he stops smoking. He's got to choose between tobacco and me. I don't care." Was that the bell? Shutting off the water, she opened the door gently, but the radio continued, a droning voice that neither rose nor fell, and no one moved in the living room. "Well, if he doesn't come, all right." She resumed her dabbing with the folded wash rag but soon noticed that water was dropping onto her wrapper and, straightening up, dried her face on the big bath towel that hung over the tub and looked at herself in the mirror. Her blue eyes were no longer inflamed. She combed back her short hair, pleased at the way it glinted in the light, then with a hand-mirror examined the back of her neck. When the bell rang, she stood motionless, listening. Finally, she opened the door, just a crack, and heard Bruce's voice in the hall, then her mother asking him to come in, and her father

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and Robbie both saying: "Hello, Bruce". Now he was standing in the living room, taller than Pa, with his dark hair that never would stay brushed. He couldn't ever quite get the black grease out from under his nails, but what could you expect working in a garage that way? Her mother would be saying: "Sit down, Bruce", and he would listen to the radio.

There were steps on the stairs. She closed the door. Down the hall she heard someone rapping at her bedroom, then a moment later, Robbie called: "Hey, Sis!" and knocked at the bathroom. What did he want to come chasing up after her for? She wouldn't go down. Tears began to ooze out again.

"What, Robbie?"

"Bruce is here. Come on down."

For a moment she did not answer. She almost gathered her wrapper about her and hurried out, thinking of Bruce down there; but all at once she thought: "I hate him! I won't!" and sat down on the edge of the tub and replied: "Tell him I'm sick. I don't want to come down."

"Aw, be yourself, Sis!"

She broke out once more into weeping and soon heard Robbie walk away. She would drink iodine from the bottle marked, "Poison", and they would find her lying on the floor and would all be sorry. Miss Hoyt at the Secretarial School would be sorry; Bruce would be sorry; Ma and Pa would be sorry. She opened the cabinet behind the mirror and took down the bottle. The papers would have her picture. She would make them all sorry. For a while she sat holding the iodine, then she put it back in the cabinet, opened the door and stole on tiptoe to her room, trying not to hear Bruce or any of them talking downstairs. Without undressing, she lay on her bed until he had gone.

II

At noon the next day they told her she had passed the examination, all seven of her letters being without mistakes. With another girl she went to a cafeteria for lunch. The friendly clatter of plates, the nice steam rising from the shiny pots, the smiling girls with ladles behind the counter, the young men in white coats who wheeled carts piled high with dirty dishes, the remote orchestra away over there behind all that tobacco smoke, the people laughing and eating—everything made Violet happy. Carrying her tray, she peered into cauldrons and pans, laughed when eggs emerged boiled from the machine, took three butters and two French rolls, dropped her knife and fork on the floor, said breathlessly: "Oh, thank you *so* much," when a young man picked them up.

"Wait for me!" she called, seeing her friend far ahead pause irresolute with a laden tray. The orchestra was playing that Spanish thing. There was a man who looked like Bruce. When she rested her tray on the rack under the cashier's desk, she laughed and exclaimed:

"Say, I've got a lot, haven't I?"

"You sure have," said the girl, punching the register.

Ruth was signalling to her from an empty table. Violet wished she had taken corn bread instead of the extra French roll, but it was too late now and, after all, the corn bread was so crumbly. "It breaks while you're eating it," she thought, humming the tune the orchestra was playing. Suddenly, remembering water, she halted near the marble slab on which full glasses were arranged, glanced at her tray and began to laugh. "Oh, how'll I take it with both my hands full?" she exclaimed, looking helplessly around. A bus boy put a glass among her dishes. "Oh, thank you," she said, smiling at him, and then hurried away toward Ruth, conscious that people were glancing at her as she went by their tables.

"Don't you just love this place?" she said, as she laid her plates and cup on the table. "I don't see why I don't come here oftener. Say, I almost died when Miss Hoyt told me

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I got by. Oh, you got artichoke, didn't you? Oh, I wish I had. How much is your check? Thirty-seven? Oh, mine's forty-three. I certainly can't afford to come here every day. She gave me cards to three agencies but, oh, I don't think I'll go to them to-day. Let's go to a movie this afternoon, shall we?"

The thought that she might have offended Bruce the night before troubled her from time to time. She would tell him she had passed the examination. Perhaps that afternoon she could reach him by telephone in the garage out on Fillmore Street where he worked. He hadn't said whether he was coming again this evening or not, but he probably would, because he wasn't the kind that got his feelings hurt very easily anyway. He was always sort of patient and quiet. "Just a dear," she thought now, hoping everything would be all right. Opposite her, Ruth was talking about silk stockings marked down to $2.98 and how she was going to buy a pair right after lunch. "I want to go right away because there was the biggest crowd you ever saw this morning and pretty soon there won't be any nice ones left."

"Oh, I want a pair too," Violet exclaimed. "I might just as well, because I'll probably have a job tomorrow or next day and anyway if I wait I won't be able to get them so cheap again."

That fellow over there had better not get fresh. Violet glanced away, feeling angry, but a moment later her eyes turned again toward him. He had thick blonde hair, just like her own, and his suit was the same color as hers, dark blue. Wasn't that funny? With a newspaper propped before him, he was eating a great plateful of meat, mashed potatoes and carrots and now and then drinking coffee from a cup with the spoon in it. He didn't look at her again, which piqued Violet, making her talk volubly to Ruth.

"Oh, I'm so glad I got by. I don't think I could of stood two more weeks of school. Miss Hoyt is nice enough all right, but don't you think she's awful sarcastic? I mean you never know whether she's serious or not. Oh, I certainly hope I don't have to work south of Market! I just won't do it. Is your artichoke good?"

The morning fog had cleared away by the time they emerged from the cafeteria; polished automobiles shone under the blue sky; people were laughing. The two girls paused for a moment near a flower stand on the corner, then walked along Market Street toward the department store where the sale was being held. When they were crossing through the traffic to the other side, Violet gave two or three little squeals and clutched Ruth's arm, which drew the attention of a policeman and made him step toward them.

Going through the revolving doors into the big department store, Violet wondered if she could get Bruce by telephone at the garage, but remembered that he would be out having lunch now and decided to wait until she had bought the stockings. She felt happier and more excited than ever among all these nice things. Crowds of women passed by or flocked about counters; floorwalkers stood with hands behind their backs, politely answering questions; shopgirls unrolled bolts of ribbon or reached up for boxes. The marked-down stockings lay on a broad table.

While looking at them, Violet forgot Bruce, the school, the job, home, Pa and Ma. She finally laid aside three pairs from which she would choose one. Ruth was at the other end of the table, also with a pile of stockings beside her. Pushing through intent and pawing women, Violet opened a path to her friend's side and said:

"Oh, look, Ruth, which would you take? I got one of each color. Fawn, beige and champagne. Oh, are you going to take fawn?"

"I think so."

"I don't know which to take. I like fawn too. I don't think you could make a mistake with fawn, but with a blue suit I think champagne color is nice, too, don't you think so, Ruth? I mean, oh, I don't know."

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She held them up one by one, letting them hang at full length. At last she decided on champagne color, while Ruth took fawn. On the way out through the revolving door, she said:

"Oh, I want to call up Bruce before we go to the movie. You don't mind waiting a minute, do you, Ruth? I'll go right into this drug store. There's a 'phone in there."

He answered the telephone.

"Hello! Hello! Oh, is that you, Violet?"

"Say, Bruce, I got by.—The exam.—Yeah, I got by. Isn't that grand?—I just wanted to tell you.—I certainly was. Why, I had no idea.—Say, Bruce, I'm awful sorry about last night.—Yeah.—I just felt terrible.—Oh, will you? That's fine.—About eight o'clock?—All right, Bruce.—Yeah.—Goodbye."

"I kinda wish I'd got the fawn," she said, on rejoining Ruth outside. "But I don't know. I guess I'll like the champagne. Come on, let's hurry. We just have time to get down to the California before the feature goes on. I hate to get in right in the middle, don't you?—Yeah, I got Bruce all right."

Chattering and laughing, Violet walked along Market Street, her little shoes, with very high heels, clicking rapidly on the pavement.

III

But the next morning the man in the first employment agency she went to had nothing for the moment, and in the second they gave her a test. She got down the dictation all right, and could read back her notes, except for one place near the end where she had fallen behind; but as soon as she sat down before the machine, which was old and stiff anyway, something went wrong and she couldn't make her fingers work at all. With a tense and frightened face, she worked on. At the end, the man found she had done only thirty-eight words a minute.

"Oh, I can do better than that," she said. "I just got rattled."

He wrote down thirty-eight on her card.

"That's just terrible," she thought, "having thirty-eight on the record."

He gave her an address, however, which was several blocks south of Market Street, and she went there, nearly weeping, hating the street cars, the fog, business men, yelling newsboys, warehouses, Greek cafés, lumbering trucks. Occasionally, in a mirror, she noticed her new champagne-colored silk stockings, and the sight of them tempered her desolation. "It certainly would be awful to have to work over in this district." The wind blew dust and bits of dried manure into her face. There were masts and smoke-stacks down at the end of the street.

She entered the shop of a wholesale furniture company and climbed to the office. While waiting amid odors of varnish and the sound of telephone bells, she wanted to jump up and run down the stairs and out onto the sidewalk. "Oh, I just hate this place!" She could hear several typewriters rattling. Crossing her ankles, she stretched out her legs and glanced down at her new stockings. "Oh, well, I probably won't get the job anyway."

The man who finally called her into his room took her name and address and asked her if she could run a bookkeeping machine.

"Well, no," she replied listlessly.

"Would you learn?"

"Well, I guess so. Of course, I'd much prefer to do typing."

She was looking at her stockings. She hated him and didn't want the job. When he said they would let her know, she smiled and answered, "Well, all right", and hurried out onto the street, loving the crowds and the fresh air. But despondency came over her again as she walked toward another employment agency.

She tried four places that morning. One was all right, a nice office on California Street, just where she wanted to work; but they did not even take her address, because she had not had experience enough, being

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just out of school. Then there was an awful hole away out in the Mission, some kind of cheap clothing store, very second-rate. Why, that would mean transferring onto another car and everything! They took her telephone number and she felt certain she could have the job if she wanted it. The little, bald proprietor interviewed her in his shirt sleeves and said: "You'll probably hear from us, Miss". There was another place, where they asked her if she ran a bookkeeping machine, and a fourth, also south of Market Street, in some kind of warehouse, where they told her to come back the next morning.

Depressed, she ate a sad luncheon in a hamburger joint and thought it would be much better to die than to work in the business world. Her feet in tight shoes hurt from all the walking she had done. Remembering the iodine in the bathroom at home, she imagined that she had taken it, and, sitting there on a stool before the lunch counter, with slabs of hamburger sizzling and steaming on the hot stove in the window, conjured up visions of her dead body and her weeping parents. Pa would probably telephone Bruce, or perhaps Bruce wouldn't hear of her death until morning. It would certainly be in the paper, which he always read in the street car on his way to the garage. Then she wouldn't have to sit in employment agencies and be bossed around by those nasty men who just took advantage of her because she was out of work. She felt so sorry for herself that tears began to form in her eyes. One rolled down her cheek and fell near her plate. She wiped it away with her napkin, snuffled, and began to eat.

But the afternoon was even worse, for a man in an office where they had sent her dictated a test letter and she got all mixed up and couldn't read back her notes. On Market Street she wondered if it would not be better to throw herself under a car. The sun had broken through the fog, which had left the sky a hard, cruel blue. Everything was so shiny and metallic and unpleasant. Perhaps she was just no good anyway. It was only by a fluke she had got by the examination. She was just no good. She was a poor sap. Nobody cared for her. If she died, Bruce would find somebody else. If he loved her, he'd have stopped smoking. Bruce was a goof. Last night he had smelt of tobacco more than ever. Tomorrow she would have to go back to that warehouse south of Market Street and probably she would get that job. The rotten wind was blowing.

Before going home, she returned to the Western Secretarial School to see if they had any other address for her to try. They gave her one somewhere on California Street. There was no use going there until the next day. Putting it in her bag, she went gloomily to the street and started down a hill toward the corner where she would take a car. Her high heels kept turning over on the steep sidewalk. When she was half-way down, she heard a car coming and began to run. It halted, took on passengers, moved again. "Oh," she cried, "wait!" But it continued, the conductor just glancing coldly at her from the rear platform; and when she tried to stop, one heel turned away over, the other foot slipped and she plunged forward onto the pavement, scraping both knees on the asphalt.

A man helped her up. She hobbled alone into a cigar store. There were two big holes in her champagne-colored stockings and blood was oozing from the scraped skin.

"Oh, damn, damn, damn!"

A fat man behind the counter was staring at her. "Damn! Damn!"

She wanted to kick in the glass show case, pull down all the boxes, scream and claw. Bending over, she pressed her handkerchief against her knees, one after the other.

"Oh, damn, damn, damn, damn!"

IV

But in spite of the torn stockings, the need of seeking a job, the second quarrel with

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Bruce about smoking (they had parted that evening once more in grim silence), she awoke the next morning, no longer despondent, found the sun blazing in a brilliant, uncovered sky, hummed, while dressing, the Spanish tune the cafeteria orchestra had played and turned on the radio while she was having breakfast. A man's voice croaked out directions for a daily dozen, which made her laugh and beat time with a spoon.

"Oh, I don't care," she told Ma, "I'll go to that warehouse south of Market. They told me to come back. I guess it isn't so bad working out there, once you get used to it. Besides they pay twenty-five a week and that's pretty good to start in with. Oh, gee, we've heard that fellow long enough. Isn't there any music anywhere?"

In the street car half an hour later, though her knees hurt a little, she felt friendly again toward Bruce, whom she had called a goof to his face the night before, stamping her foot. "I hope he doesn't feel bad about it," she thought. A passing automobile drew her attention and she watched it gain on the trolley car, then fall back on reaching a corner, finally speed up again and disappear. "That's certainly a swell car." Bruce was probably lying on his back in grease now, doing something above him with a monkey wrench. She would call him up at noon and make a date for the evening. "I suppose I oughtn't to of been so cross with him. He certainly is a nice fellow." Then an advertisement of a young man under a shower using a certain brand of soap caught her eye, and for a few minutes she looked at this and other pictures, laughing at one that showed a man in evening dress about to steal a spoonful of salad dressing and growing serious when she read beneath another: "Will you be dependent at sixty?" "Oh gee," she thought. "Sixty!"

In the warehouse, the same man who had interviewed her the day before asked her a few more questions and finally said:

"Well, I guess you'll do. The other girl doesn't leave till this afternoon, so you report for work tomorrow morning at eight-thirty."

He seemed like a nice enough fellow, about fifty, kind of fat. She went out feeling indifferent to her new job and walked back toward the centre of town, thinking she might just as well work in the warehouse as any other place. Of course, she hated being south of Market. She just didn't like it. All these wholesale houses and factories and docks and things. It was nearly eleven and the afternoon wind was rising, blowing scraps of paper along the dusty asphalt and stretching taut the few flags she could see on steamers. Occasionally, she had to step into the street and make her way around a truck that was being loaded across the sidewalk. Once a driver called to her, but she only tossed her head and went on.

It occurred to her that she would have time before lunch to go to the California Street address which they had given her at school the previous afternoon. She might as well see what it was, just out of curiosity. Of course, she had a job already, but it would do no harm to find out about this other place. She had none of the qualms that usually weakened her when she was looking for work, because now she didn't care. She was only doing this for fun.

As soon as she entered the financial district with its new skyscrapers and cleaner sidewalks and well-dressed men, she felt more cheerful and, in the elevator rising to the tenth floor of a high building, began to hum the Spanish tune. The elevator door clanged behind her and she walked down the long empty corridor, her heels clicking on the floor. There was only one man in the office when she stepped in. Looking up, he motioned to a chair, lowered his eyes once more to some papers on his desk, finally swung around and faced her. He was about forty, very good-looking, with black hair.

Without hesitation or nervousness she explained who she was. He pondered for a moment, looking just like Rudolph Valen-

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tino, then took a letter from the desk and said:

"Take this down."

She threw back the cover of her note-book. He dictated rapidly, but Violet wasn't the least bit flustered. She was just doing this for fun anyway. When he had finished, he said:

"Now let's see you type it off."

There was something soft and pleasant in his voice. She uncovered the machine, found paper in the drawer, inserted two sheets with carbon between them. As soon as she began to work, he turned back to his desk, which was certainly nice of him, she thought, not feeling nervous at all. She finished the letter rapidly with hardly a mistake. He read it over.

"That's all right," he said. "There's no doubt about the typing. Can you go to work right away?"

He had nice eyes.

"I sure can."

A moment later she was installed before the typewriter, her hat and coat in the closet. Mr. Stanley began to dictate a letter. "Oh, well," she thought, "they can just get another girl in that warehouse. They haven't got my telephone number anyway."

When twelve o'clock arrived, Violet descended to the street and went out into the sunlight, full of joy. She wanted to sing. Mr. Stanley was the nicest man! Before eating, she hurried off toward the department store on Market Street in order that she might buy a new pair of silk stockings, fawn-colored this time.

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JOSEPH HERGESHEIMER'S METHODS

by Sara Haardt

THERE is no more apposite way to describe Joseph Hergesheimer than to say that he is possessed of an incalculable, an almost appalling energy and an unassailable dignity. I first met him in Baltimore, at a lunch-party of four; we sat, three of us, in a boxy little room in Saratoga Street, awaiting him. He had left Richmond that morning for Baltimore—that was the last word we had heard of him; obviously his train was late. . . Then, suddenly, he was standing in the doorway, a powerfully built man, in an enormous raccoon coat, giving an effect of great height. His eyes were blue-gray, he was dark-skinned rather than ruddy, despite the high wind outside; he spoke in a voice, quick, assertive, unequivocal.

I had, swiftly, an impression less of his distinguishing features than of his amazing vitality, a certain quality that filled the room like a brilliant light. His mind, I felt, was never still. He was talking with an instant and charming casualness of his visit to Richmond, but beneath his decorative manner he was acutely conscious of every detail in his surroundings. His is a sensitive rather than an inquiring mind: literally nothing in a given scene escapes him; it is as if the whole were recreated in his consciousness—not photographically but with an infallible sense of texture and dimension. This is no ordinary gift, it is not even what the psychologists call pure visual imagery; it is primarily the expression of a creative impulse.

The room in the restaurant, it so happened, was distinguished merely by an utter lack of decoration, but his mind was occupied with it in an endless activity until, suddenly, it emerged, separate, intact; afterwards, he would characterize it in a word, a wholly complete phrase. With people, he is invariably bemused. The truth is that people, as separate, contradictory, astounding entities, disturb him; he is not unsympathetic, not inattentive, but their struggles, their vanities, their inferiorities distress rather than interest him; instinctively he withdraws from them into himself. I do not mean to suggest even remotely that he is unsocial; on the contrary he engages frequently in social pastimes: he plays golf and poker with his old friends in West Chester; he visits their charming old homes informally; he entertains, at the Dower House, guests from all parts of the world. Yet, in reality, he lives almost wholly in an immaterial world, not of people but of regretted immemorial yesterdays.

His times are so antagonistic to his spirit that this withdrawal is a spiritual necessity. To escape the discord of current improvement loud about his own house, he submerged himself in the enveloping peace of vanished quiet cities: Albany, of the 1800's, a completely placid town of gilded weather-vanes and orderly brick gables on a smooth loop of the Hudson River where—more impressive to him than any other fact—there was no noise, it was so peaceful that the English

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regimental bands, playing in the removed Meadows, made a stir and a scandal on Sunday; Natchez, soon after 1800, a pastoral town of beauty with the streets planted with China trees and bathed in a level golden light; the Washington of Andrew Jackson, where men were dignified by the virtues of independence and truth. . . . In creating the images of the life he preferred to the one he had survived to see, he forgot the present, the noise, the restless people crowding in upon him. He lived with the past.

I can readily believe that no human relationship could engage him so wholly, so romantically as did the restoration of his old Pennsylvania house to its first state. Here he could handle the tangible materials of the past in his rare hinges, shaped like large clovers, his fine doors in the earliest panelling, his flagstones and old pewter and Jersey glass. Here, with a fidelity absolute and impassioned, he actually built a house out of the past—a house set in a garden sweet with tranquillity and pervaded with a bright beauty. I have said that he restored the Dower House to its first state; he himself always speaks of restoring it, but it was entirely a process of creation. I doubt, indeed, if any house belonging in the period was so beautiful, so completely perfect in its most trifling detail. It was a task that utterly enthralled him, for it would never be finished. It was a task of years, of infinite pains, but as it became his background, with his feet on its soil, he says he felt that strength of continuity with something beautifully tangible, tangibly beautiful. It became his only absolute security in his imperfect grasp of the material world.

II

It was there that I saw him a year ago. All the windows, the doors leading into the garden were open, and the perfume of lilacs was everywhere. A great bowl of them stood on the dining table. We lingered there, over our coffee, in the glow of the candles and the gleaming old silver. Suddenly, after a pause—we had been talking of the heroic tradition of the South—he said he was going to do a book about the South. On what period of southern history? I inquired; and he answered with a shade of impatience: the only period he could write about, the valorous days of the Old South.

It wouldn't be a novel, he continued, but possibly a series of papers on the minor figures of the Civil War. There were certain men and women whom he held in the deepest regard, men and women of an aristocratic deportment and spirit. Great captains fired with inextinguishable bravery, lovely women concerned only with their beauty and their love. He named tentatively, William Lowndes Yancey, J. E. B. Stuart, Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard, Nathan B. Forrest, Varina Howell, George E. Pickett. . .

Later, when he became convinced of George Pickett's peculiar perfidy—that it was Old Armistead and not Pickett who was the real hero of Gettysburg—he dropped his name with unconcealed disgust. It was, he vigorously declared, impossible for him to write about a man for whom he had no regard, a man, who, indubitably, had stopped behind a barn while his men went into battle. For the name of Pickett he substituted the name of Albert Sidney Johnston. He had a clear picture of General Johnston as he rode down the line on the field of Shiloh. He rode easily, on a thoroughbred horse named Fire-eater. His voice was compelling. "Men," he cried, "they are stubborn. I must lead you."

Always in his period works, Joseph Hergesheimer has begun by having a vital interest in a particular person and in all the people surrounding him. This interest is inseparable from a deep personal regard; not a sentimental confusion of fact and romantic fable, but an instinctive feeling that Andrew Jackson, narrow, bigoted and unlettered though he was, had integrity. It would have been impossible for him to have accepted unfeelingly the current Pickett legend, and accorded him

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a fictitious heroism in a historic epic, in the manner and with the poetic license of such a writer as Mr. Stephen Vincent Benét. Obviously, this is not a matter of scholarship, or of picayune sentiment: it is Joseph Hergesheimer's manner of approaching life.

The morning after he had talked of doing his southern book, he called to Dorothy Hergesheimer and to me that he had been thinking of it during the night and he had fixed upon a title. *Swords and Roses.* He considered briefly "A Southern Garland"; then reverted to *Swords and Roses. Swords and Roses* was right. *Swords and Roses* it would be. During his hours of wakefulness the book had taken definite shape. The plan would be simple, apparently negligible, but always with him there is a plan, an inevitable design.

First, there would be a general paper on the South, followed by a paper on William Lowndes Yancey, one on Varina Howell and one on General Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard. He had adopted a chronological scheme. There was later some difficulty, a changing and shifting of the middle and final papers, but the book remained substantially the same. Its intrinsic character was as precisely established as the characters of the men and women who were to go into it. There was now a curious impatience in his manner; as he talked he restlessly paced the floor in an excess of energy. This was usual with him, I discovered, when he was at work upon a book. It was the first manifestation of his unremitting creative vitality.

III

Within a week he was plunged into an exhaustive course of reading. Bibliographies and books poured into the room in which he writes: first, general histories, the monumental authorities of the period, in four, six, eight —one in twenty—volumes; biographies, autobiographies, diaries, reminiscences, social histories of every description; highly technical books on military operations, topography, and climate; on the economic aspects of the war; maps, photographs, source documents. . . Joseph Hergesheimer attacked the piles in a kind of fury, he read concentratedly, ceaselessly, often as many as ten books a day; sometimes he made notes in his small cramped hand, or marked places with slips of paper, but usually he just read, absorbing facts, details, minutiæ of the period, until he was overwhelmed with the sense of being there.

There is nothing in his method of marshaling his material, he insists, that has the slightest thing to do with scholarship. His facts are not dead but alive. Many of the details he selects have a striking pictorial quality. For instance, the thing that fascinated him about Andrew Jackson was the fact that he wore a miniature of his wife about his neck on a black ribbon. He *saw* Jackson on an April night, tender with a beginning scent of lilacs, the stars dim in a sea of mist, an old and infirm man talking exaltedly of love to Martin Van Buren. Well, Martin Van Buren told himself, he had known love; his wife, too, was dead. She had left him. But Rachel had stayed with Jackson. She was with him tonight; Rachel was his greatest triumph. . . .

Details like that are not only a beginning but also an end with Joseph Hergesheimer. He began with the fact that General J. E. B. Stuart danced as well as fought in his gold spurs, presented to him by the ladies in Maryland, and he ended with General Stuart willing his spurs on his deathbed to a lady in Virginia; he first saw Varina Howell riding with Jefferson Davis at Brierfield, wearing a long dark blue habit and a small hat with a curled plume—the Mississippi River shining through clearings in the forest—and he last saw her, after the War, near the immense and leaden Mississippi, receiving Jefferson Davis home, there to remain till the end.

Literally hundreds of books and hundreds of thousands of words of notes went into the writing of *Balisand, Quiet Cities* and *Swords and Roses.* Joseph Hergesheimer went to Washington for the material for *Quiet Cities.*

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Books were sent from the Library of Congress to his hotel every day. He read, unceasingly, ten books a day—such books, for instance, as Martin Van Buren's *Autobiography*—and returned to West Chester, after nine days, with eighty-five thousand words of notes in longhand. The research and the notes for *Swords and Roses* were even more comprehensive, for the period was not so remote nor the authorities so definitive. In addition to his I made sets of supplementary notes for each paper from primary sources in the Baltimore and Washington libraries. When they were completed, each set contained a detailed chronology, thousands of words on the events, together with highly detailed notes at the end of a purely descriptive nature and a formal bibliography. Obviously there was material here for a book rather than a paper, though actually all of it went into the texture of his writing. He was prepared to write now, three thousand words a day, scarcely a word of which he ever changes.

When I visited the Dower House again, after an interval of two weeks—it was the early part of May—I read the completed initial paper. I sat in the library, a room with encircling walls of books and dim fragrances, a room for which I had formed the deepest attachment; but now, with the immaculate sheets of the manuscript in my hands, it receded from me utterly. I was lost in the strange white radiance of Alabama moonlight, my nostrils were filled with the perfumes of all the poisonously sweet night flowers I knew so well—the night-blooming cereus, white and striped four o'clocks with a heavy dew upon them, bay blossoms and an exquisite white rose, strangely luminous in the dark, called a moon rose. . . .

IV

As Joseph Hergesheimer was reading the sheaf of completed notes on Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard, turning the pages, his thoughtful frown deepened into an expression of tempered impatience. The Beauregard paper was going to prove more difficult, he said abruptly. There was enough—an abundance—of material about him, but he hadn't just the detail he wanted. He hadn't the thing that revealed Beauregard dramatically and unerringly. He fluttered the remaining sheets restlessly. Then suddenly he nodded. Here it was—he had it! As the war progressed, General Beauregard's moustache, which had been so resolutely black, became grizzled like his beard, silver like his hair. It was reported, not without malice, that he was unable to procure a black dye imported from France.

There was, of course, absolutely no proof that General Beauregard had used the dye, he continued, but it was the kind of gossip that contained the very essence of truth. Given the other details of General Beauregard's life, there was a whole philosophy in it. Pierre Beauregard, principally French in blood, was reared upon French institutions and habits of thought and ideals. His conception of perfect glory was Napoleon. He was, accordingly, sustained with an insensate pride, a fantastic vanity. He regarded his birth and position and talents without an atom of compensating humor. He never, it was clear, understood the actualities about him; he remained to the end, as handsome as possible, a soldier in bronze.

He would call his paper "Military Figure in Bronze", he added, and sighed prodigiously. That was done!

In the moment of pause it came to me that the book—*Swords and Roses*—was practically done. The remaining papers on Albert Sidney Johnston, Maffitt, Nathan B. Forrest, Belle Boyd, Stuart, and the foot soldier, were fully outlined and in the preliminary stage of composition. Between the time when a lavender haze first transformed the lilacs to the time when the petals were strewn and crumbling into a finer haze of purple dust, these insubstantial images had assumed a substantial reality. Varina Howell, in her rose-colored merino made with a corded waist and

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a full skirt, walking the paths of the gardens at Brierfield and picking her scarlet camellias, was infinitely more vivid to him than any real figure, however charming, walking the paths of his garden at the Dower House.

Its actual completion, I foresaw, would scarcely give him a moment's pause, either in a sense of accomplishment or of pleasurable relaxation. The instant he was done absorbing, testing, shaping the material it would become unimportant. He would, as a spiritual necessity, have to begin another. Books, all finished and compact—his own books—Joseph Hergesheimer says, are like people dead and imperfectly remembered. When he was a boy, between the years of nine and fifteen, he had a great regard for books; he read constantly, everything in his grandfather's fine old library. But even then, he didn't enjoy what were called masterpieces, things so well done that the form couldn't conceivably be improved. He enjoyed, principally, the paper-bound love stories to which his mother subscribed, and works on heredity.

Once he began to write he instantly disliked to read, lost interest in everything that had taken form. He isn't interested in books today, but only in the material for books. He has never seen a book, he says, as valuable as a tea rose. Never. How could it be as important as the warm real thing?

People write books, he believes, as an escape—either as a protest or a recreation. With him it is wholly a compensating process. He writes himself out of the world, as he dreamed himself out of the world in his youth. He is forever making up the difference between his performance and the necessity of his pride. Out of a wretchedly timorous boyhood, in which he suffered violent illnesses with their resultant handicaps, he created brave, incredible dreams. Out of an equally painful world, in which he suffers as acutely from noise and hypocrisy, he creates books, and escapes into a world of his own, remote and courageous.

V

Implicit in this clear perception—rather than philosophy—of his work is Joseph Hergesheimer's dislike of art and artists, his inordinate contempt for the idolatry of art. The cult that has grown up around it, he says, is ridiculous, and instead of being a record, art has begun to take the place of reality. Art, in short, has destroyed the simplicity, the innocence, of the creative and recording instincts; it has hopelessly confused the difference between good and bad work; elevated an idle and clamorous state to a position of intolerable authority.

The humbug of art has, in the same way, obscured the matter of style. Style was another term supposed to give clarity to the vocabulary of criticism; it was a particularly valuable illustration of the nonsense that has arisen, for at best style meant nothing more than the manner of an accomplishment. It is, he insists, as much the result of the ignorance as the attainment of a writer; the style of Henry James was the exposition of what he didn't know as well as what he knew. There is one best way to write a sentence, but the best way may not be desirable for different men. Frequently he has written incorrect sentences and erratic sentences and difficult sentences, but if people like his books they like them for their deficiencies as well as their attainments.

The creation of character, declares Joseph Hergesheimer, is nothing more than the use of apprehended experience, the arbitrary selection of qualities by a writer to delineate a recognizable type. There are no good books about eccentric people. The attributes that make up a character must be universal. Thus Becky Sharp is not an individual character but an arbitrary collection of universally apprehended qualities.

So Joseph Hergesheimer requires material that is not beyond the understanding of the widest and most valuable sympathy. He preferred, in *Balisand,* for instance, to write

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about Richard Bale, who was typical of his class and time, rather than of General Washington. Writing about men not exceptional in luck or capabilities, he adds, his characters often come to disaster. He doesn't, as a matter of fact, believe in the triumph or importance of the individual. That is an inconsistency, he knows; for one of his few certainties is that practically every accomplishment is the result of some individual superiority—superiority, that is, not so much of mind or actual physical weight, as of great vitality.

He has observed, further, that men of exceptional vitality are often the sons or grandsons of evangelical preachers. He remembers, with an arresting clarity, his own grandfather, Thomas MacKellar, who was a Presbyterian lay preacher, a man possessed of a veritable fury of life. He ruled his family and dominated his community less by his ringing phrases than by being so bitterly alive. When he died, he left a large family and a fortune large for those days—he helped to establish, in Philadelphia, the first type foundry in the country—and two books, *The American Printer,* an authority on typography for years, and a book of collected verse, remarkable for its vigorous simplicity.

Certainly this unquenchable vitality descended to Joseph Hergesheimer. And there was his father, Joseph Hergesheimer, perhaps one of the greatest cartographers who ever lived, whom he remembers bowed eternally over his desk, laboring endlessly with a crow-quill pen, in a perpetual aroma of camphor from his India ink, drawing painstakingly, with infinite perseverance, tiny fir trees and ships and geometrical embellishments upon his charming maps. The walls of the room in which Joseph Hergesheimer writes are hung with old maps, mellowed, beautiful images of Seventeenth Century Spain.

It seemed to me that morning, as he stood there in his garden, that he was more bitterly alive than either of these two indomitable men had ever been; he was possessed not so much by a fury of life as by the beauty of life—an insatiable desire to recreate lost loveliness. If he derived no sense of triumph or pleasurable relaxation from his accomplishment, he did derive a sense of security, of power, of affection from his old house; a delight from the texture of his amethyst Stiegel flask; a warmth from the society of Lavinia Roderick and Varina Howell and Mary Alawayes.

What would he do when *Swords and Roses* was finally done, I asked; and he answered implacably, with combative energy, "Another book!" A novel of Kentucky, or perhaps a modern novel. He had a problem for a modern novel that engaged him enormously.

Across the fairway of the golf course came gay bright voices; a group of brightly-clad figures appeared at the end of the garden path. The air was suddenly gay with laughter and sallies and personalities. Certainly there was a warm intimate gaiety here.

Joseph Hergesheimer moved always in the midst of them. He was at once attentive and sympathetic and invariably entertaining, a distinguished and completely reassuring host. This was his moment of relaxation, of escape from the tyrannical pressure of his writing. This was one of the rare times when his anxiety and labor were forgotten.

There he stood, as I say, hospitable and reassuring, and yet, as I looked at him I had an overwhelming sense of unreality. The garden, the solid structure of the Dower House vanished: I saw him in the room in the house in Biddle Street, surrounded by his old maps and his rare old mahogany, bowed over his eternal half-filled page.

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PHASES OF FICTION

by Virginia Woolf

IN THREE PARTS: PART THREE

The Satirists and Fantastics

THE CONFUSED feelings which the psychologists have roused in us, the strain they have put on us, the extraordinary intricacy which they have revealed to us, the network of fine and scarcely intelligible yet profoundly interesting emotions in which they have involved us, set up a craving for relief, at first so primitive that it is almost a physical sensation. The mind feels like a sponge saturated full with sympathy and understanding; it needs to dry itself, to contract upon something hard. Satire and the sense that the satirist gives us that he has the world well within his grasp, so that it is at the mercy of his pen, precisely fulfil our needs.

A further instinct will lead us to pass over such famous satirists as Voltaire and Anatole France in favor of someone writing in our own tongue, writing English. For without any disrespect to the translator, we have grown intolerably weary in reading Dostoievski, as if we were reading with the wrong spectacles or as if a mist had formed between us and the page. We come to feel that every idea is slipping about in a suit badly cut and many sizes too large for it. For a translation makes us understand more clearly than the lectures of any professor the difference between raw words and written words; the nature and importance of what we call style. Even an inferior writer, using his own tongue upon his own ideas, works a change at once which is agreeable and remarkable. Under his pen the sentence shrinks and wraps itself firmly round the meaning, if it be but a little one. The loose, the baggy, shrivels up. And while a writer of passable English will do this, a writer like Peacock does infinitely more.

When we open *Crotchet Castle* and read that first very long sentence which begins, "In one of those beautiful valleys, through which the Thames (not yet polluted by the tide, the scouring of cities or even the minor defilement of the sandy streams of Surrey)" it would be difficult to describe the relief it gives us, except metaphorically. First there is the shape which recalls something visually delightful, like a flowing wave or the lash of a whip vigorously flung; then as phrase joins phrase and one parenthesis after another pours in its tributary, we have a sense of the whole swimming stream gliding beneath old walls with the shadows of ancient buildings and the glow of green lawns reflected in it. And what is even more delightful after the immensities and obscurities in which we have been living, we are in a world so manageable in scale that we can take its measure, tease it and ridicule it. It is like stepping out into the garden on a perfect September morning when every shadow is sharp and every color bright after a night of storm and thunder.

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Nature has submitted to the direction of man. Man himself is dominated by his intelligence. Instead of being many-sided, complicated, elusive, people possess one idiosyncrasy apiece, which crystallizes them into sharp separate characters, colliding briskly when they meet. They seem ridiculously and grotesquely simplified out of all knowledge. Dr. Folliott, Mr. Firedamp, Mr. Skionar, Mr. Chainmail and the rest seem after the tremendous thickness and bulk of the Guermantes and the Stavrogins nothing but agreeable caricatures which a clever old scholar has cut out of a sheet of black paper with a pair of scissors. But on looking closer we find that though it would be absurd to credit Peacock with any desire or perhaps capacity to explore the depths of the soul, his reticence is not empty but suggestive. The character of Dr. Folliott is drawn in three strokes of the pen. What lies between is left out. But each stroke indicates the mass behind it, so that the reader can make it out for himself; while it has, because of this apparent simplicity, all the sharpness of a caricature. The world suffers the same simplification. A world so happily constituted that there is always trout for breakfast, wine in the cellar, and some amusing contretemps, such as the cook setting herself alight and being put out by the footman, to make us laugh—a world where there is nothing more pressing to do than to "glide over the face of the waters, discussing everything and settling nothing", is not the world as we know it. But it is not a dream world, a world of pure fantasy; it is close enough to be a parody of our world and to make our own follies and the solemnities of our institutions look a little silly.

The satirist does not, like the psychologist, labor under the oppression of omniscience. He has leisure to play with his mind freely, ironically. His sympathies are not deeply engaged. His sense of humor is not submerged.

But the prime distinction lies in the changed attitude towards reality. In the psychologists the huge burden of facts is based upon a firm foundation of dinner, luncheon, bed and breakfast. It is with surprise, yet with relief and a start of pleasure, that we accept Peacock's version of the world, which ignores so much, simplifies so much, gives the old globe a spin and shows another face of it on the other side. It is unnecessary to be quite so painstaking, it seems. And after all is not this quite as real, as true as the other? And perhaps all this pother about "reality" is overdone. The great gain is perhaps that our relation with things is more distant. We reap the benefit of a more poetic point of view. A line like the charming "At Godstow, they gathered hazel on the grave of Rosamond" could be written only by a writer who was at a certain distance from his people, so that there need be no explanations. For certainly with Trollope's people explanations would have been necessary; we should have wanted to know what they had been doing, gathering hazel, and where they had gone for dinner afterwards and how the carriage had met them. "They", however, being Chainmail, Skionar and the rest, are at liberty to gather hazel on the grave of Rosamond if they like; as they are free to sing a song if it so pleases them or to debate the march of mind.

The romantic took the same liberty but for another purpose. In the satirist we get not a sense of wildness and the soul's adventures, but that the mind is free and therefore sees through and dispenses with much that is taken seriously by writers of another calibre.

There are, of course, limitations, reminders, even in the midst of our pleasure, of boundaries that we must not pass. We cannot imagine in the first place that the writer of such exquisite sentences can cover many reams of paper; they cost too much to make. Then again a writer who gives us so keen a sense of his own personality by the shape of his phrase is limited. We are always being

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brought into touch, not with Peacock himself, as with Trollope himself (for there is no giving away of his own secrets: he does not conjure up the very shape of himself and the sound of his laughter as Trollope does), but all the time our thought is taking the color of his thought, we are insensibly thinking in his measure. If we write, we try to write in his manner, and this brings us into far greater intimacy with him than with writers like Trollope again or Scott, who wrap their thought up quite adequately in a duffle gray blanket which wears well and suits everything. This may in the end of course lead to some restriction. Style may carry with it, especially in prose, so much personality that it keeps us within the range of that personality. Peacock pervades his book.

In order that we may consider this more fully let us turn from Peacock to Sterne, a much greater writer, yet sufficiently in the family of Peacock to let us carry on the same train of thought uninterruptedly.

At once we are aware that we are in the presence of a much subtler mind, a mind of far greater reach and intensity. Peacock's sentences, firmly shaped and beautifully polished as they are, cannot stretch as these can. Here our sense of elasticity is increased so much that we scarcely know where we are. We lose our sense of direction. We go backwards instead of forwards. A simple statement starts a digression; we circle; we soar; we turn round; and at last back we come again to Uncle Toby who has been sitting meanwhile in his black plush breeches with his pipe in his hand. Proust it may be said was as tortuous, but his indirectness was due to his immense powers of analysis, and to the fact that directly he had made a simple statement he perceived and must make us perceive all that it implied. Sterne is not an analyst of other people's sensations. Those remain simple, eccentric, erratic. It is his own mind that fascinates him, its oddities and its whims, its fancies and its sensibilities; and it is his own mind that colors the book and gives it walls and shape. Yet it is obvious that his claim is just when he says that however widely he may digress, to my Aunt Dinah and the coachman and then "some millions of miles into the very heart of the planetary system" when he is by way of telling us about Uncle Toby's character, still "the drawing of my Uncle Toby's character went on gently all the time—not the great contours of it,—that was impossible—but some familiar strokes and faint designations of it . . . so that you are much better acquainted with my Uncle Toby now than you were before". It is true, for we are always alighting as we skim and circle to deposit some little grain of observation upon the figure of Uncle Toby sitting there with his pipe in his hand. There is thus built up intermittently, irregularly, an extraordinary portrait of a character—a character shown most often in a passive state, sitting still, through the quick glancing eyes of an erratic observer, who never lets his character speak more than a few words or take more than a few steps in his proper person, but is forever circling round and playing with the lapels of his coat and peering up into his face and teasing him affectionately, whimsically, as if he were the attendant sprite in charge of some unconscious mortal. Two such opposites were made to set each other off and draw each other out. One relishes the simplicity, the modesty, of Uncle Toby all the more for comparing them with the witty, indecent, disagreeable, yet highly sympathetic, character of the author.

All through *Tristram Shandy* we are aware of this blend and contrast. Laurence Sterne is the most important character in the book. It is true that at the critical moment the author obliterates himself and gives his characters that little extra push which frees them from his tutelage so that they are something more than the whims and fancies of a brilliant brain. But since character is largely made up of surroundings and circumstances,

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these people whose surroundings are so queer, who are often silent themselves but always so whimsically talked about, are a race apart among the people of fiction. There is nothing like them elsewhere, for in no other book are the characters so closely dependent on the author. In no other book are the writer and reader so involved together. So finally, we get a book in which all the usual conventions are consumed and yet no ruin or catastrophe comes to pass; the whole subsists complete by itself, like a house which is miraculously habitable without the help of walls, staircases or partitions. We live in the humors, contortions and oddities of the spirit, not in the slow unrolling of the long length of life. And the reflection comes, as we sun ourselves on one of these high pinnacles, can we not escape even further, so that we are not conscious of any author at all? Can we not find poetry in some novel or other? For Sterne by the beauty of his style has let us pass beyond the range of personality into a world which is not altogether the world of fiction. It is above.

The Poets

Certain phrases have brought about this change in us. They have raised us out of the atmosphere of fiction; they have made us pause to wonder. For instance:

> I will not argue the matter; Time wastes too fast: every letter I trace tells me with what rapidity Life follows my pen; the days and hours of it more precious,—my dear Jenny—than the rubies about thy neck, are flying over our heads like light clouds of a windy day, never to return more; everything presses on,—whilst thou art twisting that lock;—see! it grows grey; and every time I kiss thy hand to bid adieu, and every absence which follows it, are preludes to that eternal separation which we are shortly to make.

Phrases like this bring, by the curious rhythm of their phrasing, by a touch on the visual sense, an alteration in the movement of the mind which makes it pause and widen its gaze and slightly change its attention. We are looking out at life in general.

But though Sterne with his extraordinary elasticity could use this effect, too, without incongruity, that is only possible because his genius is rich enough to let him sacrifice some of the qualities that are native to the character of the novel without our feeling it. It is obvious that there is no massing together of the experiences of many lives and many minds as in *War and Peace;* and, too, that there is something of the essayist, something of the soliloquist in the quips and quirks of this brilliant mind with the nature of the novel. He is sometimes sentimental, as if after so great a display of singularity he must assert his interest in the normal lives and affections of his people. Tears are necessary; tears are pumped up. Be that as it may, exquisite and individual as his poetry is, there is another poetry which is more natural to the novel, because it uses the material which the novelist provides. It is the poetry of situation rather than of language, the poetry which we perceive when Catherine in *Wuthering Heights* pulls the feathers from the pillow; when Oak watches the sheep by night; when Natasha in *War and Peace* looks out of the window at the stars. And it is significant that we recall this poetry, not as we recall it in verse, by the words, but by the scene. The prose remains casual and quiet enough so that to quote it is to do little or nothing to explain its effect. Often we have to go far back and read a chapter or more before we can come by the impression of beauty or intensity that possessed us.

Yet it is not to be denied that two of the novelists who are most frequently poetical—Meredith and Hardy—are as novelists imperfect. Both *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* and *Far from the Madding Crowd* are books of great inequality. In both we feel a lack of control, an incoherence such as we never feel in *War and Peace* or in *A la Recherche du temps perdu* or in *Pride and Prejudice.* Both

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Hardy and Meredith are too fully charged, it would seem, with a sense of poetry and have too limited or too imperfect a sympathy with human beings to express it adequately through that channel. Hence, as we so often find in Hardy the impersonal element—Fate, the Gods, whatever name we choose to call it—dominates the people. They appear wooden, melodramatic, unreal. They cannot express the poetry with which the writer himself is charged through their own lips, for their psychology is inadequate, and thus the expression is left to the writer, who assumes a character apart from his people and cannot return to them with perfect ease when the time comes.

Again, in Meredith the writer's sense of the poetry of youth, of love, of nature is heard like a song to which the characters listen passively without moving a muscle; and then, when the song is done, on they move again with a jerk. This would seem to prove that a profound poetic sense is a dangerous gift for the novelist; for in Hardy and Meredith poetry seems to mean something impersonal, generalized, hostile to the idiosyncrasy of character, so that the two suffer if brought into touch. It may be that the perfect novelist expresses a different sort of poetry, or has the power of expressing it in a manner which is not harmful to the other qualities of the novel. If we recall the passages that have seemed to us, in retrospect at any rate, to be poetical in fiction we remember them as part of the novel. When Natasha in *War and Peace* looks out of the window at the stars, Tolstoy produces a feeling of deep and intense poetry without any disruption or that disquieting sense of song being sung to people who listen. He does this because his poetic sense finds expressions in the poetry of the situation or because his characters express it in their own words, which are often of the simplest. We have been living in them and knowing them so that when Natasha leans on the window sill and thinks of her life to come our feelings of the poetry of the moment do not lie in what she says so much as in our sense of her who is saying it.

Wuthering Heights again is steeped in poetry. But here there is a difference, for one can hardly say that the profound poetry of the scene where Catherine pulls the feathers from the pillow has anything to do with our knowledge of her or adds to our understanding or our feeling about her future. Rather it deepens and controls the wild, stormy atmosphere of the whole book. By a master stroke of vision rarer in prose than in poetry people and scenery and atmosphere are all in keeping. And, what is still rarer and more impressive, through that atmosphere we seem to catch sight of larger men and women, of other symbols and significances. Yet the characters of Heathcliff and Catherine are perfectly natural; they contain all the poetry that Emily Brontë herself feels without effort. We never feel that this is a poetic moment, apart from the rest, or that here Emily Brontë is speaking to us through her characters. Her emotion has not overflowed and risen up independently, in some comment or attitude of her own. She is using her characters to express her conception, so that her people are active agents in the book's life, adding to its impetus and not impeding it. The same thing happens, more explicitly but with less concentration, in *Moby Dick*. In both books we get a vision of presence outside the human beings, of a meaning that they stand for, without ceasing to be themselves. But it is notable that both Emily Brontë and Herman Melville ignore the greater part of those spoils of the modern spirit which Proust grasps so tenaciously and transforms so triumphantly. Both the earlier writers simplify their characters till only the great contours, the clefts and ridges of the face, are visible. Both seem to have been content with the novel as their form and with prose as their instrument provided that they could remove the scene far from towns, simplify the actors and allow nature at her wildest to take part in the scene. Thus we can say that there is

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poetry in novels both where the poetry is expressed through the characters and again where the poetry is expressed not so much by the particular character in a particular situation, like Natasha in the window, but rather by the whole mood and temper of the book, like the mood and temper of *Wuthering Heights* or *Moby Dick* to which the characters of Catherine or Heathcliff or Captain Ahab give expression.

In *A la Recherche du temps perdu,* however, there is as much poetry as in any of these books; but it is poetry of a different kind. The analysis of emotion is carried further by Proust than by any other novelist; and the poetry comes, not in the situation, which is too fretted and voluminous for such an effect, but in those frequent passages of elaborate metaphor, which spring out of the rock of thought like fountains of sweet water and serve as translations from one language into another. It is as though there were two faces to every situation; one full in the light so that it can be described as accurately and examined as minutely as possible; the other half in shadow so that it can be described only in a moment of faith and vision by the use of metaphor. The longer the novelist pores over his analysis, the more he becomes conscious of something that forever escapes. And it is this double vision that makes the work of Proust to us in our generation so spherical, so comprehensive. Thus, while Emily Brontë and Herman Melville turn the novel away from shore out to sea, Proust on the other hand rivets his eyes on men.

And here we may pause, not, certainly, that there are no more books to read or no more changes of mood to satisfy, but for a reason which springs from the youth and vigor of the art itself. We can imagine so many different sorts of novels, we are conscious of so many relations and susceptibilities the novelist had not expressed that we break off in the middle with Emily Brontë or with Tolstoy without any pretense that the phases of fiction are complete or that our desires as a reader have received full satisfaction. On the contrary, reading excites them; they well up and make us inarticulately aware of a dozen different novels that wait just below the horizon unwritten. Hence the futility at present of any theory of "the future of fiction". The next ten years will certainly upset it; the next century will blow it to the winds. We have only to remember the comparative youth of the novel, that it is, roughly speaking, about the age of English poetry in the time of Shakespeare, to realize the folly of any summary, or theory of the future of the art. Moreover, prose itself is still in its infancy, and capable, no doubt, of infinite change and development.

But our rapid journey from book to book has left us with some notes made by the way and these we may sort out, not so much to seek a conclusion as to express the brooding, the meditative mood which follows the activity of reading. So then, in the first place, even though the time at our disposal has been short, we have travelled, in reading these few books, a great distance emotionally. We have plodded soberly along the high road talking plain sense and meeting many interesting adventures; turning romantic, we have lived in castles and been hunted on moors and fought gallantly and died; then tired of this, we have come into touch with humanity again, at first romantically, prodigiously, enjoying the society of giants and dwarfs, the huge and the deformed, and then again tiring of this extravagance, have reduced them by means of Jane Austen's microscope to perfectly proportioned and normal men and women and the chaotic world to English parsonage, shrubberies and lawns.

But a shadow next falls upon that bright prospect, distorting the lovely harmony of its proportions. The shadow of our own minds has fallen upon it and gradually we have drawn within, and gone exploring with Henry James endless filaments of feeling and relationship in which men and women are enmeshed, and so we have been led on with

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Dostoievski to descend miles and miles into the deep and yeasty surges of the soul.

At last Proust brings the light of an immensely civilized and saturated intelligence to bear upon this chaos and reveals the infinite range and complexity of human sensibility. But in following him we lose the sense of outline, and to recover it seek out the satirists and the fantastics, who stand aloof and hold the world at a distance and eliminate and reduce so that we have the satisfaction of seeing round things after being immersed in them. And the satirists and the fantastics, like Peacock and Sterne, because of their detachment write often as poets write, for the sake of the beauty of the sentence and not for the sake of its use, and so stimulate us to wish for poetry in the novel. Poetry, it would seem, requires a different ordering of the scene; human beings are needed, but needed in their relation to love, or death, or nature rather than to each other. For this reason their psychology is simplified, as it is both in Meredith and Hardy, and instead of feeling the intricacy of life, we feel its passion, its tragedy. In *Wuthering Heights* and in *Moby Dick* this simplification, far from being empty, has greatness, and we feel that something beyond, which is not human yet does not destroy their humanity or the actions. So, briefly, we may sum up our impressions. Brief and fragmentary as they are, we have gained some sense of the vastness of fiction and the width of its range.

As we look back it seems that the novelist can do anything. There is room in a novel for story telling, for comedy, for tragedy, for criticism and information and philosophy and poetry. Something of its appeal lies in the width of its scope and the satisfaction it offers to so many different moods, desires and instincts on the part of the reader. But however the novelist may vary his scene and alter the relations of one thing to another—and as we look back we see the whole world in perpetual transformation—one element remains constant in all novels, and that is the human element; they are about people, they excite in us the feelings that people excite in us in real life. The novel is the only form of art which seeks to make us believe that it is giving a full and truthful record of the life of a real person. And in order to give that full record of life, not the climax and the crisis but the growth and development of feelings, which is the novelist's aim, he copies the order of the day, observes the sequence of ordinary things even if such fidelity entails chapters of description and hours of research. Thus we glide into the novel with far less effort and less break with our surroundings than into any other form of imaginative literature. We seem to be continuing to live, only in another house or country perhaps. Our most habitual and natural sympathies are roused with the first words; we feel them expand and contract, in liking or disliking, hope or fear on every page. We watch the character and behavior of Becky Sharp or Richard Feverel and instinctively come to an opinion about them as about real people, tacitly accepting this or that impression, judging each motive, and forming the opinion that they are charming but insincere, good or dull, secretive but interesting, as we make up our minds about the characters of the people we meet.

This engaging lack of artifice and the strength of the emotion that he is able to excite are great advantages to the novelist, but they are also great dangers. For it is inevitable that the reader who is invited to live in novels as in life should go on feeling as he feels in life. Novel and life are laid side by side. We want happiness for the character we like, punishment for those we dislike. We have secret sympathies for those who seem to resemble us. It is difficult to admit that the book may have merit if it outrages our sympathies, or describes a life which seems unreal to us. Again we are acutely aware of the novelist's character and speculate upon his life and adventures. These personal standards extend in every direction, for every sort of prej-

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udice, every sort of vanity, can be snubbed or soothed by the novelist. Indeed the enormous growth of the psychological novel in our time has been prompted largely by the mistaken belief, which the reader has imposed upon the novelist, that truth is always good; even when it is the truth of the psycho-analyst and not the truth of imagination.

Such vanities and emotions on the part of the reader are perpetually forcing the novelist to gratify them. And the result, though it may give the novel a short life of extreme vigor, is, as we know even while we are enjoying the tears and laughs and excitement of that life, fatal to its endurance. For the accuracy of representation, the looseness and simplicity of its method, its denial of artifice and convention, its immense power to imitate the surface reality—all the qualities that make a novel the most popular form of literature—also make it, even as we read it, turn stale and perish on our hands. Already some of the "great novels" of the past, like *Robert Elsmere* or *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* are perished except in patches because they were originally bolstered up with so much that had virtue and vividness only for those who lived at the moment that the books were written. Directly manners change, or the contemporary idiom alters, page after page, chapter after chapter, become obsolete and lifeless.

But the novelist is aware of this too and while he uses the power of exciting human sympathy which belongs to him he also attempts to control it. Indeed the first sign that we are reading a writer of merit is that we feel this control at work on us. The barrier between us and the book is raised higher. We do not slip so instinctively and so easily into a world that we know already. We feel that we are being compelled to accept an order and to arrange the elements of the novel—man, nature, God—in certain relations at the novelist's bidding. In looking back at the few novels that we have glanced at here we can see how astonishingly we lend ourselves to first one vision and then to another which is its opposite. We obliterate a whole universe at the command of Defoe; we see every blade of grass and snail shell at the command of Proust. From the first page we feel our minds trained upon a point which becomes more and more perceptible as the book proceeds and the writer brings his conception out of darkness. At last the whole is exposed to view. And then, when the book is finished, we seem to see (it is strange how visual the impression is) something girding it about like the firm road of Defoe's story telling; or we see it shaped and symmetrical with dome and column complete, like *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma.* A power which is not the power of accuracy or of humor or of pathos is also used by the great novelists to shape their work. As the pages are turned, something is built up which is not the story itself. And this power, if it accentuates and concentrates and gives the fluidity of the novel endurance and strength, so that no novel can survive even a few years without it, is also a danger. For the most characteristic qualities of the novel—that it registers the slow growth and development of feeling, that it follows many lives and traces their unions and fortunes over a long stretch of time—are the very qualities that are most incompatible with design and order. It is the gift of style, arrangement, construction, to put us at a distance from the special life and to obliterate its features; while it is the gift of the novel to bring us into close touch with life. The two powers fight if they are brought into combination. The most complete novelist must be the novelist who can balance the two powers so that the one enhances the other.

This would seem to prove that the novel is by its nature doomed to compromise, wedded to mediocrity. Its province, one may conclude, is to deal with the commoner but weaker emotions; to express the bulk and not the essence of life. But any such verdict must be based upon the supposition that "the novel" has a certain character which is now fixed and cannot be altered, that "life" has

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a certain limit which can be defined. And it is precisely this conclusion that the novels we have been reading tend to upset.

The process of discovery goes on perpetually. Always more of life is being reclaimed and recognized. Therefore, to fix the character of the novel, which is the youngest and most vigorous of the arts, at this moment would be like fixing the character of poetry in the Eighteenth Century and saying that because Gray's *Elegy* was "poetry" *Don Juan* was impossible. An art practised by hosts of people, sheltering diverse minds, is also bound to be simmering, volatile, unstable. And for some reason not here to be examined, fiction is the most hospitable of hosts; fiction today draws to itself writers who would even yesterday have been poets, dramatists, pamphleteers, historians. Thus "the novel", as we still call it with such parsimony of language, is clearly splitting apart into books which have nothing in common but this one inadequate title. Already the novelists are so far apart that they scarcely communicate, and to one novelist the work of another is quite genuinely unintelligible or quite genuinely negligible.

The most significant proof of this fertility, however, is provided by our sense of feeling something that has not yet been said; of some desire still unsatisfied. A very general, a very elementary, view of this desire would seem to show that it points in two directions. Life —it is a commonplace—is growing more complex. Our self-consciousness is becoming far more alert and better trained. We are aware of relations and subtleties which have not yet been explored. Of this school Proust is the pioneer, and undoubtedly there are still to be born writers who will carry the analysis of Henry James still further, who will reveal and relate finer threads of feeling, stranger and more obscure imaginations.

But also we desire synthesis. The novel, it is agreed, can follow life; it can amass details. But can it also select? Can it symbolize? Can it give us an epitome as well as an inventory? It was some such function as this that poetry discharged in the past. But, whether for the moment or for some longer time, poetry with her rhythms, her poetic diction, her strong flavor of tradition, is too far from us today to do for us what she did for our parents. Prose perhaps is the instrument best fitted to the complexity and difficulty of modern life. And prose—we have to repeat it —is still so youthful that we scarcely know what powers it may not hold concealed within it. Thus it is possible that the novel will come to differ as widely from the novel of Tolstoy and Jane Austen as the poetry of Browning and Byron differs from the poetry of Lydgate and Spenser. In time to come—but time to come lies far beyond our province.

THE END

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THE CARAVAN AND THE SHAKERS

by Elizabeth Coatsworth

Think of all peaceful things: green hills and gold valleys,
Think of sheep feeding and cows in the shade,
Wide barns of stone, firm walls and deep orchards
And gray comely houses in order arrayed,
And the hum of spinning wheels, and the odor of herbs
On the drying racks laid.

Think of all gay things, transient and silly,
Glittering, tawdry, romantic and wild,
Out of the woods on the post road is pouring
In the pale light of morning, the dream of a child—
Elephants, clowns, lions, giraffes, and General Tom Thumb
Have amazingly come.

Think of the General stopping his carriage
While Shakers all to the windows ran
And the quiet beasts of the farmyard winded
In wide-nostrilled alarm the caravan,
And Tom Thumb himself gave orders for new pony-blankets
And a turkey-feather fan.

All things end: the moment is broken,
Time preens his wings and spreads them for flight,
The General waves, men yell, beasts lunge forward
And the bright procession passes from sight
While the busy Shakers stand idle-handed watching the Albany road
For a last sparkle of light.

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THE HISTORY OF THEIR BOOKS

VI. S. S. VAN DINE

by Arthur Bartlett Maurice

HAROUN-AL-RASCHID, in the Bagdad of the *Thousand and One Nights,* was no more in his golden prime than is the detective of fiction today, who traces his literary ancestry back through Sherlock Holmes to the Monsieur Lecoq and Père Tirauclair of Emile Gaboriau, the C. Auguste Dupin of Edgar Allan Poe and beyond that through the mists to the Zadig of M. Arouet de Voltaire. In the genealogical scheme Sherlock Holmes, now a venerable gentleman in his mid-seventies engaged in bee cultivation on a farm in the Sussex Downs, may be regarded as the nearest ancestor of a numerous progeny that has enlivened the first quarter of the Twentieth Century. It is only fair to say that no one of his sons has attained to anything like the eminence of the father who is now rather in the shadow, but who was for a decade or two the most widely known character in all fiction—even accepted by many as a real personage. There is food for thought in the celebrity that yesterday was Sherlock's, when ten persons knew of him to one who had ever heard of *Hamlet* or *Robinson Crusoe* or *Pickwick Papers.*

Contemplating his numerous literary offspring, Sherlock Holmes probably has a sense of general satisfaction and a particular pride in the achievements of a selected few. Favored sons are likely to be Jacques Futrelle's Professor Augustus S.F.X.Van Dusen, Ph.D., F.R.S., M.D., etc., better known as *The Thinking Machine;* G. K. Chesterton's Father Brown; H. C. Bailey's Reginald Fortune; A. E. W. Mason's Hanaud of the French Sûreté; Ernest Bramah's Max Carrados; Lynn Brock's Colonel Gore; Arthur B. Reeve's Craig Kennedy; Gaston Leroux's Rouletabille; Melville Davisson Post's Uncle Abner; Agatha Christie's Hector Poirot; R. Austin Freeman's Dr. Thorndyke; and S. S. Van Dine's Philo Vance. Mingled with the sentiment of admiration for the last named, there is perhaps a touch of envy, for Sherlock Holmes has seen his last recorded adventures, *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes,* comparatively neglected, while Philo Vance, riding high on the crest of popularity, has attained with four books, *The Benson Murder Case, The "Canary" Murder Case, The Greene Murder Case* and *The Bishop Murder Case,* a total sale of more than 600,000 copies.

Who is Philo Vance? In one sense he is a purely imaginary and invented character; in another sense he is a gentleman by the name of Willard Huntington Wright, a product of Harvard and Oxford, a dilettante who has written books on painting, philosophy and esthetics. He lives in an apartment on New York's upper west side near the Hudson River and from his windows can look down upon the scenes associated with the tragedies recorded in *The Bishop Murder Case.* When Philo Vance's conversation is particularly "high-brow", the reader is listening to Mr. Wright in a whimsical and ironic mood.

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Worldly success sometimes comes in strange ways. S. S. Van Dine was born of a nervous breakdown that Willard Huntington Wright suffered in 1923—the result of working for years under tremendous pressure as the editor of several magazines, carrying monthly articles on painting, drama and music in other publications. In addition to these routine labors, he wrote nine books on a variety of cultural subjects. When the World War broke out he was living in Paris, writing fourteen hours a day. One morning, early in 1923, he jumped out of bed and his knees gave way under him. For over two years, until the middle of 1925, he was confined to his bed, depressed and nervous, often unable to sleep and, worst of all, forbidden by his physician to read. Finally, that restriction was withdrawn, with the reservation that the reading be confined to the reading of detective stories. For two years Mr. Wright devoured detective mystery fiction. He set to work to discover the reason for its almost universal appeal, to trace its evolution, to define its laws. He co-ordinated and systematized his reading. He began with the works of Gaboriau and Poe and gradually came down, in chronological order, to the present day. The services of book dealers in New York, London, Paris and Berlin were enlisted, and at the end of the two years he had accumulated a library of nearly two thousand volumes.

In September, 1925, he was informed by his doctor that he might begin to write again after January first of the following year. In the four months that intervened he outlined a series of detective stories, created his Philo Vance and worked out the plots for three books, making a thirty-thousand word synopsis of each story. The first to be written was *The Benson Murder Case*. The idea has been generally prevalent that the suggestion for that story came from the events surrounding the Elwell murder of 1920. Actually that case was never in mind, and it was not until the book was finished and published that Mr. Wright realized that there was any resemblance between the two cases.

Again, contrary to popular belief, *The "Canary" Murder Case* had nothing whatever to do with the Dot King murder. The underlying theme of the book was night life on Broadway. For material, the author went, not to the Dot King case, but to the Budapest case of the woman known as La Belle Bohémienne, a reigning night life queen who was found murdered in her apartment. In the early drafts of the story the title was "The Whippoor-will Murder Case". But one day Mr. Wright's secretary paused in the course of taking dictation to remark: "You would choose the hardest word in the language to type. Do you mind if, in this draft, I simply put down a *W?*" Thereupon Mr. Wright decided that a word that puzzled his secretary would be likely to puzzle readers and the whippoor-will became a canary.

The Greene Murder Case was originally without the final *e*. That was added to ensure that people should not be under the mistaken impression that the story had to do with a color. One of the main ingredients that went into the making of that book was the atmosphere of Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher*, a feudal house imagined as perched up on a cliff overlooking the river, a *locale* that Mr. Wright studied with great care and in detail before putting pen to paper. But the volume that Mr. Wright considers the greatest of mines for the writer of detective fiction is *The Handbook for Examining Magistrates*, by Hans Gross, Professor of Criminology at the University of Graz. Besides clarifying the story, the addition of the final *e* in the word, Greene, conforms to the unintentional plan of having the distinctive word of each title six letters in length.

The feudal setting in the heart of ultra-modern New York was the underlying idea of *The Greene Murder Case;* higher mathematics, that of *The Bishop Murder Case*. When the latter story was still in embryo form, Mr. Wright had luncheon one day

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with the editor of the magazine in which it eventually appeared. The talked turned to the subject of methods of murder. The editor maintained, for example, that for the purposes of fiction a murder by bow and arrow was impossible. Mr. Wright agreed with him but later, thinking it over in the light of his own considerable study of the subject of archery, he accepted the editor's dictum as a challenge. Bow and arrow would play their part, and the title would be "The Cock Robin Murder Case". That was changed to "The Mother Goose Murder Case" and the book was first announced under that title. The eventual "Bishop" was adopted not so much because it conformed to the six-letter rule, as because it served a double purpose in heightening the mystery. But, again, there is the six-letter aspect to the forthcoming book, *The Scarab Murder Case,* of which the underlying idea is Egyptology.

Mr. Wright has his own credo as to the devices whose usefulness has been outlived and are, therefore, taboo to any self-respecting writer of detective fiction. These forsworn devices are as follows:

(*a*) Determining the identity of the culprit by comparing the butt of a cigarette left at the scene of the crime with the brand smoked by the suspect.

(*b*) The bogus spiritualistic séance to frighten the culprit into giving himself away.

(*c*) Forged finger prints.

(*d*) The dummy figure alibi.

(*e*) The dog that does not bark and thereby reveals the fact that the intruder is familiar.

(*f*) The final pinning of the crime on a twin or a relative who looks exactly like the suspected, but innocent person.

(*g*) The hypodermic syringe and the knockout drops.

(*h*) The commission of the murder in a locked room after the police have actually broken in.

(*i*) The word association test for guilt.

(*j*) The cipher, or code letter, which is eventually unravelled by the sleuth.

As the utterance of Mr. Wright, the list of forbidden devices is fair enough. Regarded as coming from Philo Vance, it is disrespectfully unfilial, for most of the devices were familiar weapons in the arsenal of Sherlock Holmes.

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A LONDON LETTER

by Rebecca West

"Porgy" in London—Mr. Beerbohm and the Literary Ladies—Departed elegance—English books and American critics

London, April.

I HAVE come back from a week in the country to find London altered by the introduction of a certain American factor. That factor is *Porgy*. I do not know how long *Porgy* will run, for it is housed in one of the largest theatres in town, which can hardly be filled for more than a few weeks unless Shakespeare and the more decorous forms of spectacular drama (real camels but not much pectoral exposure) draw to it the vast hordes of the tame-minded. But in any case it has left an ineffaceable impression on the intelligent Londoner. It has given people who have never crossed the Atlantic a sense, which people like myself have labored in vain to give them, of the inexhaustible richness of life in the United States. That there should be embedded in the pallor of an English-speaking civilization the dark primitive stuff which is the subject matter of *Porgy;* that there should come into play at the point of embedment (though not, one would think, specially relevant to it) the peculiar Southern poetic sensitivity, languid and graceful, of which Du Bose Heyward is an exquisite example; that there exists an organization like the Theatre Guild which has devised ways and means by which anything so serious and novel can be put before the public, which can lay hands on talents as exotic and fiery as that of the director, Mr. Reuben Mamoulian, and which confidently allows Mr. Heyward and Mr. Mamoulian the time and money to experiment with untaught material and weave it into the harmony of forces which is sweeping English audiences off their feet—these facts have profoundly impressed London. Such richness is exactly what we have not got. The only good thing about the English theatre is the acting, which is superb. But there is a deep affection on the part of all persons concerned for threadbare material, and complexity of production is simply unknown. The teamwork you see in *Journey's End* is superb, but unfortunately that is as far as we can go, and it is chamber music. A full orchestra is beyond us. So London is taking off its hat to New York for *Porgy,* and well it may.

* * *

Impressed though I am by these phenomena, the Du Bose Heywards nevertheless slipped out of my mind very early during proceedings at the dinner which was given in their honor by Mr. Theodore Byard (of Heinemann's) and Mr. Russell Doubleday. Charming as they were (and Mrs. Heyward was looking very beautiful indeed, like a picture by Alfred Stevens, the Belgian, with her dark curling hair which restrains itself from curling so much that it spoils the shape of her head, and her pallor which is like an

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exquisite form of reserve), they were displaced in my mind by the more poignant figure of Mr. Max Beerbohm. He presented himself at the party, looking extraordinarily like one of those little Chinese dragons that are made in the white porcelain known as *blanc-de-Chine*. Like them he has a perfectly round forehead and eyes that press forward in their eagerness; and his small hands and feet have the neat compactness of paws. His skin, which is clear as a child's, and his blue eyes, and his white hair which sweeps back in trim convolutions like such a little dragon's mane, have the gloss of newly washed china. He is, moreover, obviously precious, and not of this world, though relevant to its admiration: a museum-piece if ever there was one. It could be seen at once that he was not at ease, that he wished himself back again in his rightful home in the Ceramics Department of the South Kensington Museum. He was looking round with surprise, with distaste—and I perceived that his eye was lighting on members of my own sex—on members of my own profession. Yes! he confessed it, in his gentle, courteous voice, which has about it something of a Chinese calm, he did not like literary ladies. He did not mind saying as much to me, since I was of course an exceptional woman. One could see the little dragon reflecting that, since I was a literary lady, he might say that to me and be believed. Yes, he repeated, that proviso having been blandly inserted, he did not like literary ladies. And he had thought he had seen two. Or even three.

At that moment the party really began to arrive. Miss G. B. Stern and Miss Sheila Kaye-Smith came together, followed by Lady Russell (Elizabeth of *Elizabeth and Her German Garden*), whose bland and minute aspect falsely promises the world that butter will not melt in her mouth. Then came Mrs. Belloc-Lowndes, the writer of detective stories, who looks (if you can get the idea) like a pretty Queen Victoria. Then came Mrs. C. N. Williamson, who seemed to be holding romance firmly to its place in modern life, by a large Juliet cap of diamonds; and that superb Roman matron, the author of *Serena Blandish*. They were, I noticed nervously, coming larger now. The sculptural splendors of Miss Clemence Dane, darkly draped, gave the doorway for an instant the air of being a really handsome memorial to somebody who had died in a noble cause.

I perceived that on this tide Mr. Beerbohm was beginning to bob like a cork. It seemed a pity that he had come. He had no doubt been encouraged to form other dreams of the evening's personnel by the invitation cards, which had bidden us to dine in the Charles II suite of the Carlton Hotel. I had thought myself that, in view of the notorious fact that King Charles's dinner-companions were for other than women writers, this was not too suitable for a literary dinner. When we rose to go into the other room for dinner, still more of the dangerous breed pressed in on us. The average woman writer, I was suddenly conscious, runs to height, and force, and mass. More and more did Mr. Beerbohm appear priceless, minute, perilously frangible. Finally we sat down in our appointed places, which were at the very end of the immensely long table. Up the long vista the clear blue eyes travelled, and remained protruded in horror; and, indeed, no one, save the All-Seeing Eye of Providence, can ever have seen so many women writers at once.

* * *

Were we literary women, I inquired of him, like the violets that had been strewn on the table-cloth with prodigality but no very successful decorative effect?—rived from our right place in secluded dells to pursue an esthetic aim that we never could quite realize? With exquisite courtesy, in the faintest of moans, he assented. So hypnotic an effect is exerted by the delicate, fixed perfection of his personality, and so single-minded is he in his concentration on the thing which seems to him most beautiful—and that is the

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society (as his memory softens and recreates it) which died with the 'nineties—that I had by now entirely passed over to his state of mind. I found myself lachrymosely remembering the appearance of my father and mother, as I had seen them from my nursery window some time about the beginning of the century, when they walked down the garden path to a hansom cab that waited to take them to a garden party. How completely dedicated to beauty and uselessness was my mother's form! On a waved plethora of hair a large hat rode like a boat, with a bird's wing for its sail; an immense snake of feather floated round her neck, which was cased in white net supported by invisible whalebones; on her pouched silken bodice she wore an immense bunch of Parma violets, upside down; her minute waist was clipped in by a petersham belt; her sleeves were vast bells and her skirts were a vaster bell under which flounces and flounces of stiff silk rattled like an artillery that fired silver shrapnel. Her whole appearance, seen in apposition to the soldierly bearing of my father and his relatively simple and sensible clothing, cried out, "So completely am I expected to do nothing useful! Look, I prove it by shackling myself with these garments so that I could not possibly do anything useful if I tried!"

The benignant quality of the society which could afford to maintain half its members for ornamental purposes was further illustrated by the sweep of my father's silver-gray top-hat as he waved it towards the house before he jumped into the hansom cab; and by the appearance of the hansom cab itself, with its curvetting horse, its jingling bells, its driver with his black top-hat, his carnation button-hole, and his beribboned whip. Entrancing world that has departed! Tears came into my eyes. I could almost smell the hawthorn that had bloomed in our garden that long-distant day. I was willing to admit that, to one accustomed to such hobbled elegancies as my mother's, we women writers must look an uninviting company. Our nearest equivalent in charm was, perhaps, a group of factory chimneys in a northern dawn; or an assembly of Fords at a parking-place.

It was at this point that I suddenly caught sight of Lady ——, the wife of a sporting baronet. I felt as if my life—for so strongly had my sympathetic nature identified itself with Mr. Beerbohm's suffering that my life was practically his—were saved. For she is beautiful, but not a beauty of today. She does not belong to a past as remote as that which Mr. Beerbohm insists on making his present, but the morning of her flowering was in King Edward VII's reign. Her silver hair springs and curls and coils, unrestrained by that urgent sense of the necessity of sleek loyalty to the scalp that makes us, her juniors, look so all alike. I am sure that somewhere about her slender form she has concealed a waist which will be brought out in perfect order, should the fashion change. She has that air which only women who were young in England before the War can achieve, of not understanding machinery and of being able to get on quite well without the knowledge. This enables one to feel comfortably that the universe can be conducted with all the works hidden out of sight round the corner, being looked after by somebody else: it induces a fantasy that the universe need have no works at all, but can just beautifully be projected, the image of a few nice people's minds. She was obviously exactly what I—that is, what Mr. Beerbohm wanted. "Look," I said. "There's Lady ——." "Oh, where?" said Mr. Beerbohm. "She is so charming. Oh, there!" He sighed. There were perhaps twenty female poets and novelists between them. But the dinner came to an end. Mr. Beerbohm stood up hopefully and Lady —— saw his hope and presently bore down on him with outstretched hand. Alas! the errors we commit, the images of ourselves we smash on the altars in other people's souls, through not knowing precisely what kinds of deities they have chosen to make of us! She ap-

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proached him more confidently than she had ever done before, since at last (in her opinion) she had bridged a certain gulf between them, and cried out in her deliciously fresh and jubilant voice: "Mr. Beerbohm, do you know that since I last saw you I have written and published a book?"

* * *

Of course, the spirit of the age always wins. But since it had won, I thought Mr. Beerbohm might as well make the best of it, so I introduced him to G. B. Stern. There is much in Miss Stern's mind just now, for the play she has made out of *The Matriarch,* with which the Knopfs made a great success a year or two ago, is being produced in May, and the title rôle is being played by Mrs. Patrick Campbell, who, it is said, is making a comic character of Falstaffian richness out of it. But she forgot even her rehearsals in the prospect of meeting Mr. Beerbohm, for whose works she has an almost fanatical enthusiasm. With glowing eyes she sat down beside him. His courtesy was perfect, his response to her admiration exquisitely gracious; yet the sense that he was not happy in this atmosphere made itself apparent. Impossible for his interlocutor not to feel guilt at being part of the atmosphere, at belonging so bleakly to today. Casting about for a subject to talk about, she looked down the immensely long table at Mr. Russell Doubleday, whose extreme thinness, seen from a distance, appeared almost as a vertical straight line. It reminded her of the exercise in perspective one does in the art-class, where one draws lines that stretch away to the vanishing point. Thus it was she came to turn to the most famous living caricaturist and ask him in accents so clear that there could be no possible mistake about what she said, "Did you ever learn to draw, Mr. Beerbohm?" The next day at a lunch party, Mr. John Van Druten heard a still, small voice, complaining that gooseberries were not so good as they had been when he was a young man; bigger they might be nowadays, but they hadn't the delicate flavor. . . . Need I say, ladies and gentleman, that that voice belonged to Mr. Max Beerbohm?

In Georges d'Agay's play, *Les Aventures d'un jeune homme bien élevé,* the hero goes for a short space to live in Hell, which he finds indistinguishable from a tenement in Montmartre. On the same story lives an elderly female demon whom he encounters when she comes in a striped gray flannel dressing-gown to draw water from the tap on the landing. On one of those occasions she grows garrulous and informs him that she was one of those who tempted St. Anthony in the wilderness. Remembering that the saint kept his sainthood, the hero does not quite know what to say; and the demon, remarking his silence, says shortly, "There is a dignity attached to history as well as to success, you know, monsieur". Such a dignity, I feel, attached (in the matter at least of Mr. Max Beerbohm) to himself, Lady ——, Miss G. B. Stern, Miss Clemence Dane, Lady Russell, Mrs. Belloc-Lowndes, Miss Sheila Kaye-Smith, and the rest of the women writers who so inappropriately gathered in the Charles II suite to meet Mr. and Mrs. Du Bose Heyward.

* * *

What a gulf there is between the older and the younger writers in England! It is well exemplified by the fact that when Mr. George Bernard Shaw gave a reading of his new play, *The Apple Cart,* it took place at the house of your Lady Astor in St. James's Square, which is a center of Conservative political life, but quite off the beat of the ordinary author. Nothing that anybody over middle-age writes just now seems quite real to the people under fifty; and the interests of the people under fifty seem perverse and nonsensical to their seniors. I do not think there is anything like such a definite division in the intellectual or artistic life of America. But I have been made very conscious lately

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how great a difference there is between American and English conditions generally by the reception given by Americans to certain English works of art. In *The New Republic,* for example, I read a review of Siegfried Sassoon's *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man* by Mr. T. S. Matthews and a review of *Journey's End* by Mr. Stark Young, which show how completely the most intelligent critic can miss the point of a work of art through insufficient knowledge of the civilization which produces it. The *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man* was considered in England to be the most important book of the season next to Virginia Woolf's *Orlando.* The best critical opinion ranked it far above Mr. Lytton Strachey's *Elizabeth and Essex.* It was to us not the straightforward picture of country life which surprised Mr. Matthews by its simplicity. It was to us the heart-rending portrait of a class that was allowed to play at being children until the war came and then was delivered, bound hand and foot, to the forces of Hell. So, too, it seems to us strange when we read Mr. Young's opinion that (although he does honor to the play's poetic feeling) "the picture of dug-out life that you get in *Journey's End* has at best the sentimental value of certain sorts of fiction; it is obvious on the face of it that if all that group of men we see there were no more intelligent than they are, there would be more brutality in judging their mental states of mind and more stupidity and cruel lack of imagination; their shadows and lights would be blacker and whiter and their savors stronger". Yet to us the real theme of the play was the presentation of just such a psychological state as Mr. Stark Young pronounces impossible. We knew that the public schools and grammar schools had worked hard for centuries to produce a class which is not intelligent and not stupid and brutal; which has no black shadows and no white lights and no strong savors.

The pathos of *Journey's End* is that which arises from the precipitation of a class, bred from its beginnings to eschew violence, into the most violent of all conceivable experiences, with no words to express their agony but the insipid vocabulary of their education, no gods to guide them save the unhelpful gods of Puritan athleticism.

* * *

This season has brought us an excellent novel which exemplifies the difficulty of a truly international appreciation of fine literature: Miss Elizabeth Bowen's *The Last September.* She wrote a tiresomeish, headachey novel about finicking personal relationships called *The Hotel* which was chosen by either the Book-of-the-Month Club or the Literary Guild a year or so ago. *The Last September* is far finer stuff. It gives a picture of the Anglo-Irish society, aristocratic, accomplished, listless, feckless, that sat for centuries in the midst of a conquered country as if it were having a pleasant picnic and hardly noticed that it was being driven out by an armed rebellion until its houses were burned over its head. Yet Americans tell me they find it difficult to follow, and I fancy the reason is that they have an exaggerated idea of the homogeneity of British life. But if they realize that the granting of Home Rule destroyed an aristocratic English society resident in Ireland as effectively (though on a smaller scale) as the Civil War destroyed an aristocratic American society resident in the Southern States, they will find this an excellent example of the novel of character, in which use has been made of Chekhov's technique. I like it better myself than the other great success of the moment, Mr. Vernon Bartlett's *Calf Love,* which is, though charmingly written, another example of the curious preoccupation of Englishmen with their adolescent experiences which I was describing recently; and when the simple love story with a young female as its chief character has been removed, on account of its insipidity, from the predominance over fiction it once enjoyed, it seems a pity that it should creep back with

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the young male as its subject. It is another *Young Woodley* with the hero meeting his Laura in the person of a pig-tailed *mädchen* when he is lodging in a German family, and it ends dramatically with the young man locking a more responsive and experienced lady out of his bedroom. I read it when I was staying at Christchurch, in Hampshire, in a house opposite the rectory; and as I laid it down I looked nervously at the rectory door. For it was here, I had been told, that the vicar and his friends, when the last volume of *Pamela* had been finished and they realized that the heroine's virtue was forever secured to her by a marriage ceremony, rushed out and insisted on the bell-ringer hastening to the church and pealing out a wedding chime. I couldn't feel sure that, things being as they are today, the vicar's wife, terrible in tweeds, would not rush out with a copy of *Calf Love* in her hand and insist on my taking my turn at the bell-ropes. Times, as Mr. Max Beerbohm and I would thoroughly agree, are so greatly changed.

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THE PRINTED WORD

THE ECONOMY OF EDITORS

by Wilson Follett

Modern newspaper writing has somehow got itself a name for extreme verbal economy. The trained journalist is popularly supposed to make twenty words suffice where an ordinary mortal outside a newspaper office would use fifty with less effect. Every spring, men who give elective courses in composition in American universities advise the young intending author to serve an apprenticeship to journalism, that he may learn under compulsion to write a disciplined, condensed style and so discover the advantage of murdering his rhetorical darlings. The belief that the newspaper man is a master of pithy utterance is so widespread that newspaper men actually believe it themselves, in the face of daily disproof that would annihilate their conviction on almost any other subject in the world. Perhaps the truth is that the journalist is himself the originator and prime source of this legend and has impressed it upon himself along with the rest of us by assiduous use of his unexampled machinery for instruction by repetition. A man believes anything if he hears it often enough, especially when he is constantly saying it himself.

A little systematic observation and analysis will show anyone that four-fifths of modern newspaper writing is much more diffuse and wasteful than anything else in print that is anywhere nearly as readable. What a journalist really masters is the trick of saying the same thing over and over in more ways than would ever occur to a less specially trained mind. How could it be otherwise, when so much of his output is expressly composed to suffer the minimum of detriment if cut off at any point beyond the opening paragraph, like a modern building reared with special reference to the ease with which it can be demolished? The exigencies of the journalist's calling include no need, and provide little opportunity, for the sort of writing in which every syllable counts and no word can be spared without impairment of the whole effect—and what test of writing, if not that, is the definition of a finished economy? No: journalistic work, when it is stylistically good —and a fraction of it is of astounding merit— is good for reasons usually unconnected with brevity. The newspaper writer does himself a disservice, anyway, by habitually stressing condensation as the cardinal merit of style. Condensation is a by-product of polish, and most journalism is forbidden polish by both the conditions in which it is done and the purpose for which it is undertaken. When all is said, the only indispensable virtue of style is readableness; and a style can be readable with ease and pleasure whether it be severely condensed or lax and sprawling. It can also be totally unreadable either way. Practically all newspaper writing is readable at the same time that it is diffuse, except that which is unreadable, whether diffuse or not.

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What, then, are the excuses for the prevalent delusion that journalism is the great school of economy in the use of words? A long vigil has failed to catch more than the following unsatisfactory handful:

(*1*) There is a good deal that the journalist, unlike the imaginative writer, has to ignore altogether, as being outside his province; and by the heedless he is accredited with a talent for succinctness merely on the ground of what his profession requires him not to attempt—as if the knack of saying a thing briefly were demonstrated by not undertaking to say it at all.

(*2*) The typical news story opens with a rigidly patterned summarizing sentence designed to answer as many as possible of the questions, Who? What? When? Where? How? Why? (This formula defines the average reporter's training in verbal economy. His grasp of it is necessary and perhaps admirable, but it has about as much to do with trenchant expression as ability to keep the box-score of a baseball game.)

(*3*) The ingenious shorthand resorted to by the writer of headlines is so closely planned for its space as to involve actual letter-counting. The English of headlines is, indeed, the ultimate in terseness; but it constricts even more than it compresses, and it is sometimes hard to say whether it inflicts the more torture on the language or on the reader.

These three items constitute almost the whole story of why so many of us regard the daily paper as a model of concision. The rest of that story—and it is even less adequately explanatory—is told in the depressing fact that the business of journalism, take it by and large, is transacted in an amazingly limited and impoverished vocabulary. This fact does not explain for the reason that a curtailed vocabulary is no friend to verbal economy. It takes words to save words; the fewer we have, the more we squander. There is the verbal economy of making the one word well chosen suffice for two; but there is also the mental waste of making one word ill chosen confuse two meanings. When we find the New York *Evening Post* using "apparent" for "evident" six times in the editorial page of a single issue, it is evident (not merely apparent) to us that the practice is hardly resorted to in the interest of a wise thrift. Many months of deliberate observation have failed, by the way, to identify a single American newspaper which habitually distinguishes between these two words, the one applicable to that which is clearly true, the other to that which seems to be true, whether it is or not. Yet one word is as common, as readily understood by the mass of readers, as the other. The editorial writer lets one botch the work of both for no reason except that it is easier—for him—always to represent a whole group of somewhat similar ideas by one symbol than to bother himself with their exact differences. Whence "continuous" for "continual"; "disinterested" (comparatively a learned word) for "uninterested" (comparatively a popular one); "infer" for "imply"; "expect" for "suppose"; "verbal" for "oral" (as if a contract drawn up and signed had somehow become less verbal than the same contract under discussion by word of mouth); "mutual" for "common" and so on. The only economy effected by this sort of condensation of various meanings under one word-sign is economy of editorial effort. Destitute vocabularies make easy writing and hard reading.

Now, not only do some of these alleged incentives to terseness in journalistic writing lead actually to prolixity, but the influences which do make for terseness produce worse disasters than prolixity ever was. Specifically, the peculiar idiom in which headlines are composed is having an enormous influence, and by no means a happy one, upon every department of the newspaper of today, and not least upon its editorial departments. Editors, despite the strongest resistance which can be maintained by their stylistic conscience, slip insensibly, almost inevitably, into the habit of referring to facts and occurrences in the phraseology by which headlines have made these familiar to the whole public.

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From that practice the editorial writer graduates just as naturally into referring to other facts and occurrences in such diction as the headlines *might* coin. The result is that editorials and headlines abet each other's worst; both lead and both follow, by turns, and the most serious type of corruption now at work in English is enormously speeded by the interaction.

This matter of headlines and their influence, because it does have so important a bearing on linguistic decay, is worth going into with whatever technical detail may be necessary to make it clear. Just how do the headlines achieve their brevity? Obviously, by declaring the completest possible independence of the parts of speech. A stock example is the commandeering of the perfectly good verb, "probe", as a noun with the sense of "investigations". (*Cf.* also "steal", "haul" and "grab" as nouns.) Forty-nine times in fifty the license takes the form of treating an actual noun as an adjective—of reserving to nouns the right to modify each other with all freedom and impunity. It is this trick alone which, in its total effect, becomes seriously important. "Senate oath", "death car", "rescue vessel", "suicide pact", "arbitration gain", "arson suspect", "relativity theory", "big navy plan", "treaty plan" and "umpire snarl" are ten examples at random out of hundreds. The last two, from one international news dispatch in the New York *Times,* are peculiarly atrocious because they signify, respectively, a plan *for* a treaty not yet drawn and a snarl relating to the choice of umpires not yet appointed. One page of the New York *World* has "G. O. P. tariff", "labor support", "college head", "tariff cut"; one page of the New York *Herald Tribune,* "dry law repeal", "arms pact", "San Luis Potosi State" and "narcotic detective".

It is admitted that an implicit tendency of the English language is the formation of innumerable compounds of just this order, in which the first word has a quasi-adjectival force. But the fact that the natural growth of English brings forth multitudes of these formations to serve actual new meanings is the best of reasons against artificial multiplications of them to serve nothing better than the tricky mechanical purpose of saving a line here and a quarter-inch there. Our language is always being kept at the saturation point of its ability to assimilate such compounds, which at best are inexpressive of its genius. English, though a Germanic tongue, has in its grammar and its history enough of the Latin, the Romance, element to deny it the freedom with which, for instance, the German language compounds new words out of old. In German a glove is, quite characteristically, a hand-shoe; if the glove had existed first, the shoe would have been a foot-glove. The military tank of the late war is said, possibly by some impish Germanophobe, to have been called at first *"Schutzengraben-vernichtigungsautomobil".* In English the parts of speech have a more obstinate identity and function. The general law is that the compound expression *follows* the rise of the changed feeling which evoked it. Even strictly necessary compounds—*e.g.,* "airport"—are felt as makeshift and rather wooden until the ideas which they denote are taken for granted by everybody. The conservative English, who affect to define our civilization in terms of its plumbing, still hyphenate "bathroom". The point is, Anglo-American nouns are not decent adjectives until there is a universal, if unconscious, sense that their scope has become extended through necessity. "Pen name", though a translation of non-existent French, and "headline" itself rapidly overcame their original defect by their genuine serviceableness; whereas the headliner's "radium victims", "forgery suspect", "sewer graft allegations" and the like correspond to no linguistic need or feeling and solve a purely physical problem. They enrich the language in the same way that that associated perversion, condensed type, enriches typography.

But, unlike condensed type, they do profoundly and widely affect our habits of

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speech and writing. Practically every editorial column and signed department of every newspaper contains the traces of their influence. "Prohibition enforcement", "repeal sentiment", "peace organization", "law observance", "the Hoover pronouncement" (illustrating a favorite form of reference which good manners should abolish if good rhetoric is powerless), "farm problem", "campaign predictions", "good-will trip", "cruiser parity", "naval limitation conference", "railroad consolidation legislation", "census data", "wreck survivors", "the alimony abuse", "education theory", "the oil-lease stand", "conservation proposition", "the present over-production situation", "in a matter of such purely Senate concern"—this cluster was taken in five minutes from editorials published almost simultaneously in cities from Los Angeles to Providence. It covers the equally wide gap between language barely tolerable and language downright infamous; and the worst specimens are from the best papers. Such examples of what we might call, after its own idiom, headline English suggest the principal cause of so much editorial writing today that is stylistically metallic and graceless.

The minor causes involve a miscellany of dubious habits more than one of which denote, likewise, an attempt at syllable-saving. There is, for instance, the persistent use of the possessive case of words denoting impersonal and inanimate objects of forces—"the volcano's eruption", "the incident's meaning", "education's opportunity". There is also the resort to vague pronouns, and especially to "this", to save the trouble of localizing one's meaning in intelligible words. It is, for instance, a shock to find the New York *World* —ordinarily among the very best written of American newspapers, especially in its editorial departments—saying editorially: "If George Washington drank and swore, it is well for us to know it, and not have [a fishy "have"] the fact suppressed in the interest of what some patriotic society may consider patriotism. But obviously it [what?] can be carried too far. And particularly is this [what?] true when it [again, what?] is dishonest, as it is all too often. The minor writer who is having a hard time achieving any success . . ." and so on through a sentence with enough slack in it to cover the nakedness of the foregoing and still save cloth.

The fact is that, among the editors, outbreaks of verbal economy are sporadic and, "all too often", misplaced. In one edition the New York *Sun* referred to (*1*) "physicians and nurses who were administering [*i.e.,* ministering] to the injured and sick", and to (*2*) "a director . . . who took over the ministration [*i.e.,* administration] of relief". There is the perfect paradigm of editorial economy, which is no more brilliantly inventive of ways to save a syllable in one place than it is of devices for wasting it in another. And the editor has incomparably more influence upon the development of the printed language than anyone else except the reporter—of whom a word presently.

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FICTION

LITTLE CÆSAR *by W. R. Burnett* (DIAL. $2.00)

THIS is just the sort of book which is likely to be overlooked or given a raw deal by the literary panjandrums; and I hope that so many copies of it will be sold that its author will not care how it comes through the baptism of pea-shooters. As the book is sponsored by the Literary Guild, this pious wish will doubtless be fulfilled. The story is written in that hard American English which has now gone silly with Sherwood Anderson, and threatens to go literary with Ernest Hemingway. With Mr. Burnett, it has gone just about right.

Little Cæsar is the story of the rise of a gang leader in Chicago. If it isn't true to life, then the newspapers aren't true to life, nor the people you see in the subway, nor Big Bill Thompson, nor Tammany Hall. Mr. Burnett doesn't tell any more about what is going on inside his people's heads than a good reporter would, and he tells it better, because he's free of the reporter's stereotype.

Sam Vettori was king of Little Italy, until Rico, a hard wop from Youngstown, came along and joined his gang as a gunman. Rico didn't drink, had no vices, didn't trust women, killed when it seemed expedient. Vettori got fat and lazy, didn't like to take chances. Rico watched his opportunity, ousted Vettori, followed up his victory, got in with the Big Boy himself, and for a brief, tense hour was on top of the world. Then the inevitable something went wrong; Cæsar fell.

These people, as simply and effectively outlined as the silhouettes of a poster, first arrest our attention by their violence and crudity, and then hold our interest by the sureness of their pantomime. It is not necessary that we too should have been inhabitants of the underworld to recognize this play-acting as essentially true—or what is better, perhaps (at least more comprehensible): an artistic representation of truth. All the essential actors of the human drama are here: "horror and scorn and hate and fear and indignation". Love is behind the scenes, and plays a rôle that is minor and timid and little influential; the stage-manager seems to have felt that love would have been miscast in such a company —and doubtless he was right.

This is apparently the first novel which its author has published. It is, equally apparently, not the first novel he has written. Nobody, at the first attempt, could have foregone the unnecessary, obvious, trite and sentimental irrelevancies and attitudinizings which Mr. Burnett has known how to leave out of his. Would that his example could be followed by other writers of first novels. It will not be. But that will be all the better for Mr. Burnett. His name is not yet well known. If he can go on to other and less lurid stories of American life and handle them as dispassionately and as intensely as he has handled this one, his name should become a household word. In which case, the critics may as well get up a Literary Guild of their own.

T. S. MATTHEWS

PASSING *by Nella Larsen* (KNOPF. $2.00)

THERE is a growing attitude of rebellion on the part of critics against the assumption that the Negro problem is a romantic problem; that the case of the individual of mixed blood, desperately seeking poise in a world wherein he is perforce abnormal, is a dramatic case. Nevertheless, the position of the individual out of harmony with his surroundings, set

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apart from the ordinary run of human beings, is indeed pregnant with pathos, and to the writer—the analyst of human emotions—full of dramatic possibilities.

Miss Nella Larsen has felt the innate drama of her protagonists, but her well-planned story, written with a quiet and careful artistry, has not completely fulfilled the promise inherent in her theme. Her three central characters are well realized—Irene, who could have passed for white, but whose fierce racial consciousness makes her contemptuous of those who go outside their own kind; Clare, fair and beautiful, married to a man ignorant of her Negro blood, to whom the call of Harlem eventually proves irresistible; Brian, darker than the others, longing for South America with its easier tolerance, but held in check by his wife, Irene, who clings for herself and for her husband and sons to the security of the life she already knows. But there is not sufficient depth to the background against which these are painted. Even in these days of tolerance and broad-mindedness towards artistic forms, a mere forty thousand words are not sufficient to develop a theme of importance against a firm and satisfying background.

The device of taking for granted the reader's interest in and knowledge of life among Harlem's cultured upper class would be successful in a short story and is not without effectiveness here. But the dramatic climax lacks conviction, not so much because of its inherent improbability as because of the insufficiency of the preparation—it needs a very decided push, such as could scarcely escape the attention of a crowd of people with gaze concentrated upon the victim, to send a woman hurtling through a window. Against a more richly-painted background these creations of Miss Larsen would have stood out as memorable figures.

The author is fond of the fashionable affectation of the deliberately and elaborately split infinitive. A worse fault is her lack of sympathy with a very real problem. Irene's passionate devotion to the Negro race to which she only partly belongs is a natural enough defensive instinct; but Clare's case is as real, and infinitely more deserving of compassion. Ninety percent white, her longing to identify herself with the people among whom all her maturity has been spent is at least as understandable as her later craving to return to Harlem society. If Miss Larsen had presented Clare directly, instead of obliquely through Irene, she would have made of her a more satisfying character. As it is, her problem is never clearly stated and in the end is evaded.

It is this perfunctory background that accounts for the reader's dissatisfaction with a well told and at times a really moving story, related in a careful, well-balanced prose, and revealing with sincerity and at times with subtlety a group of finely differentiated characters. This is a contribution of value to the growing list of "border line" literature.

ESTHER HYMAN

FATHER WILLIAM *by Donald Ogden Stewart* (HARPERS. $2.50)

GIDDY idiocy is one of the rarest things in the world; I suppose it is one of the most impermanent. Now you have it, and you write *The Parody Outline of History;* now you don't, and you write *Mr. and Mrs. Haddock in Paris, France.* Stewart, in his stride, was to me superlatively comic; Benchley, Marc Connelly, Lardner, even Sullivan were never funnier; but Stewart, once that superb rhythm was broken, once the effect of lunacy became a trick and the sputtering wit was merely by courtesy of the New York Edison Company, was fast becoming unfunny. He could never be out-and-out dull, as for example Will Rogers so invariably is; but the true spark was not there any more, the comedy was studied and sometimes haggard, the bones showed.

And if there had not been a genuine sense of humor underneath it all, it would have been one more case of a good comedian shoul-

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dering his bag of tricks and starting down the long, long trail labeled "Hack". Stewart, thank God, was too good for that. Even while the old familiar grin was still beaming, with only the slightest suspicion of a weariness at the corners, he was already practising a new and a charming smile to take its place. And it is significant that while his books of travesty are still in the front of the field, he has just emerged with a mild and sunny bit of humorous fiction of a wholly new nature called *Father William*. Myself, I think it the most durable one of the lot.

Briefly, the book is the comedy of a father whose sense of fun outstrips and baffles his sober-minded children. The plot is not important; the significant thing is that these people are warm and real, not the grotesque and outrageous comic masks of Stewart's previous books. There are flashes of his familiar nonsense in the patter; occasionally it slips into the descriptions; but it never startles the story out of its amiable progress, it never breaks the illusion. First and foremost Stewart is telling a story, and he tells it extremely well. And it makes swell reading.

This is distinctly a new Stewart. Personally, once I have adjusted my old loyalties, I almost like him better this way. He is bound for a less sophisticated audience, but a far wider one. They will like his comfortable charm, the natural dialogue, the real people in his book; where once they were bewildered and a little terrified by the savage glee of his burlesque, now they will sense with relief a genuine quality of understanding. I hope Don won't think I'm just being an old nance if I say that, beneath it all, his new touch is astonishingly tender.

COREY FORD

TO THE SUN *by Arista Edward Fisher* (COSMOPOLITAN. $2.50)

UNLESS certain limitations are accepted in advance, a biographical novel about William Shakespeare presents an appalling task. None but a genius should attempt to capture upon paper the vivid creative life of England's greatest genius. And a genius, one thinks, would be too wise to try. Fortunately, Mr. Fisher has accepted the limitations—no premonitory notes of the verdict of posterity echo in *To the Sun*. Instead of an unconvincing, clothes-horse god of letters, Mr. Fisher has given us a perfectly credible and vigorous Elizabethan playwright who, it is not hard to believe, may also have been Shakespeare.

With the facts of Shakespeare's life Mr. Fisher has dealt admirably. *To the Sun* is clearly the result of sound scholarship and finely imaginative study. But the disputes are decided and the factual inconsistencies are resolved behind the scenes. No faint flavor of pedantry is left to mar the result. From the moment when John Shakespeare's young son, already "spoilt with a wife", sets out for London with his brain full of euphuistic rhymes and his heart buoyed by Sidney's praises, his life is as real and glowing as life in romance is ever likely to be.

Very convincing, too, is the ardent young poet who loved Kit Marlowe for his mighty verse, envied him for his fame, and hated him bitterly for his undisputed possession of the dark lady of the sonnets. But the story of Shakespeare that Mr. Fisher tells is not that of the poet, it is the amazing tale of his long passion for Mistress Margaret Samaran. There were days of tawdry, life-wasting struggle, nights of drunkenness and self-recrimination. What had he done yet to justify his flight from Stratford; what was there to satisfy Anne for her years of querulous waiting? He begged odd jobs, copied legal documents for a scrivener, swept out James Burbage's theatre and haunted perpetually the taverns where King Kit and Margaret held court. He helped Marlowe to patch up some old plays concerning the bloody rows between the houses of York and Lancaster. And then some of his scenes began to draw applause, and the creator of Tamburlane was not the only poet pointed out in the taverns.

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The years led him swiftly to fame of his own, and to money which he sent to Anne. But the dark, constant mistress of Marlowe was Marlowe's still—even after the tragedy at Deptford. He filled his days with work, and long after he had won the praise of the people and the flattery of the court, Margaret came to him—for the two stormy, passionate years which crowned his life. Then the plague swept back over London, and the sprawling, filthy city was filled with the tolling of bells and the clatter of dead-carts. Throughout the delirium which preceded death, the poet waited by Margaret's bedside—waited in anguish for a word from her, a word for himself. But all her words were for King Kit. So Shakespeare turned his back upon the city of his triumph and set out, honored, successful, and defeated, for Stratford and his dull, uncomprehending wife.

Many of Mr. Fisher's characters are pleasantly touched with satire—gusty, learned Ben Jonson, the foppish Southampton, even the Queen. But the portraits of Shakespeare and Margaret Samaran are dramatically pure. Mr. Fisher has made the story of their strange, violent, unsatisfied love into a moving novel —more in spite of his ambitious setting than because of it.

MARGARET WALLACE

YOUNG WOODLEY *by John Van Druten*
(JOHN DAY. $2.00)

MR. VAN DRUTEN gives not so much a picture of young love as of its befouling by ill-trained educators, to whom sex is synonymous with sin.

Young Woodley is the only child of a lonely home, whose mother died in his infancy and whose father, kindly but inarticulate, is unable to make a friend of his sensitive son. The boy goes to an English public school and attains adolescence in an environment which is constantly quivering to the alarms that follow on the escapades of less continent students with housemaids and shop-girls. Strung like an arrow for his flight toward what should be one of the most tender and beautiful of human experiences, he seeks healthy relief for his tension in the writing of love poems. Even this attempt at sublimation makes him the butt of a housemaster's clumsy sarcasm, and he falls in love with the master's young, lovely and unhappy wife. He is surprised in the act of kissing her for the first time. Her efforts to save him from her husband, none too intelligent in themselves, drive him to the degradation of his emotion and to a hysterical outburst that leads to his expulsion.

Woodley is too obviously the plaintiff in a case which Mr. Van Druten is pleading against the English public school. It is incredible that any system could have lived so long under the guidance of such housemasters as the author presents for our detestation. With the exception of one member of the junior staff they are stupid, ignorant and unkind. The picture is too black to be thoroughly convincing, and the reader is wearied by sentences that suggest a movie director trying to explain a state of mind to an unimaginative actor:

> He loved her. He was in love with her . . . But that could not be. She must never know. She was Simmy's wife; the wife of his housemaster, of a man he hated!

Despite many faults in his presentation, *Young Woodley* emerges as the portrait of a fine, clean-minded boy, misled by those whose appointed task was the preservation of his purity.

NORAH MEADE

JEHOVAH'S DAY *by Mary Borden*
(DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.50)

MISS BORDEN'S conception in *Jehovah's Day* is striking but she overdoes it. Her struggling and dreaming characters are set against a background that is as broad as history but the intensification that she evidently intended by

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such a machinery somehow defeats itself. Her day is a hundred millions of years old and it starts when Eryops, the Mud Puppy, noses his way to land from the slime; it is in its twilight when Hilary and Orchid, Ann and Patrick O'Hagan, Peregrine and Time itself struggle against and for themselves. In other words Miss Borden has placed the action of a modern novel against a semi-symbolic, suggestive-progressive background of the growth of human passions and intelligences. We are to consider the evolution of the human race as having taken place in this long day. At first, this *modus operandi* of compelling our orientation of man in his own history seems admirable but there comes a point when the constant injection of the past into the present clogs the modern story. It is in the passions and perplexities of Hilary and Orchid and Ann and Patrick and Peregrine and Martha that our interest lies and not in their remote connection with a Mud Puppy. The story itself is arresting enough, for it is an excellently-sustained narrative of the conflicts of love with more than a little mysticism permeating it, like a delicate mist. And in Patrick O'Hagan and Ann Miss Borden has created two admirable characters, troubled beings whose love is the hub of the story. An intellectual ambitiousness is evident in Miss Borden's scheme, and, while there is much excellent writing that conveys clearly enough the philosophical implications of her tale, the effect, as a whole, is jarred somewhat out of focus by the ambitiousness. Still, *Jehovah's Day* contains enough evident ability to impress and beguile the reader.

A DISH FOR THE GODS *by Cyril Hume* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.50)

MR. HUME'S latest effort is a bad novel for two major reasons and half a dozen minor ones. In the first place it is badly constructed, jumping backward and forward in an incoherent manner and introducing far too much extraneous matter, and in the second place the development of the central character is unbelievable. The childhood, girlhood and married years of Aline are presented well enough; but Aline, the lecherous-minded widow, is another individuality altogether. There is too much sensitivity and perception and fineness in the early Aline to make possible the rather foggy-minded, sexually-obsessed widow who carries *A Dish for the Gods* to its dispiriting conclusion. Mr. Hume strives obviously to convince us of the logicality of his development and perhaps he has convinced himself; but, it seems to me, he quite fails to convince his readers. Perhaps certain elements in the nature of the early Aline were so familiar to Mr. Hume that he neglected to introduce them into his exposition of the character. Perhaps, again, the carefully drawn portraits of Aline's father and mother and the carefully-documented presentation of her slow and unwilling development of sexual passion are intended to convince us of the dim-witted demands of her later years. But in either case, the situation does not evolve reasonably. In any book by Mr. Hume we may expect some excellent writing, some acute characterizations and a number of vividly realistic scenes. *A Dish for the Gods* is no exception to such expectations. There is much in it that is satisfying; there is still more that disturbs and irritates the reader. The potentialities, even the subject-matter, for better things are here but the author has not taken advantage of them. The result is a book that falls below Mr. Hume's *Cruel Fellowship*.

HERBERT GORMAN

THE FIERCE DISPUTE *by Helen Hooven Santmyer* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $2.50)

IT seems incongruous that so belligerent a title should have been given to a tale which is gently withdrawn from life, which strikes the faint sad chords of an old tune. Miss Santmyer has successfully shrouded her characters in an atmosphere of loneliness and decay, but she has failed to dramatize the stubborn, in-

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growing conflict which absorbed them. One gleans from this book a series of haunting pictures—an ancient house drowned in a sea of overgrown grass, an old-fashioned child fingering the yellow keys of a piano and playing with the imagined shades of children long dead. In comparison, the struggle between Hilary Baird and her mother leaves one unmoved.

Hilary married in Italy a musician named Paolo who was conspicuous both for his genius and his infidelities. When the latter became insupportable, she returned to America with her child. Penniless, they were taken in by old Mrs. Baird on the condition that her father's name should never be mentioned to Lucy Anne and that the child should have no musical education lest she follow in his dubious paths. Hilary accepted the bargain but fought against it with silent strength. In the end she triumphs through the intensity of her passion for Paolo, who is now dead and whose spirit, one gathers, works through her, though in a manner which borders regrettably on the supernatural. Lucy Anne is saved for the career to which she was destined.

Despite the excellence of the atmospheric tone, this novel suffers because one is never able to believe in the force of emotion that binds Hilary to Paolo. Miss Santmyer has chosen a theme and a background which, however remotely, are reminiscent of *Wuthering Heights*. It would, perhaps, have taken an Emily Brontë to do them justice.

EDITH H. WALTON

THROUGH THE LATTICE *by Evelyne Close* (HINKLE. $2.00)

STRANGE in its effect is this dark tale of rural England. A brooding mountain, the Scaur, dominates the book, breeding a race of gaunt, limping men; shelving sufficiently to hug to itself a graveyard and a latticed cottage window where a mother waits for the return of her dead son, a soldier; shadowing the fat-cropped plain which stretches to the sea. The story concerns itself with the tangled lives of four families, those of the Hill Farm and the Low Farm and the two lowlier families on the slopes of Scaur. It is fashioned of the old cloth of parental coercion, rebellion, a destroyed household, the canker of illegitimacy and the influence of superstition. No subtleties are here, no nuance, no recognition that right and wrong may be relative. Everything is as definite as the yawning graves.

The main, trite theme follows the efforts of Old Rigg, a piece of rock cleaved from the mountain, to unite the lands through the marriage of his son of the Hill Farm to the daughter of the Low Farm. The two humble families intervene; the yawning graves intervene. The characters pass up and down the rough road of the Scaur through dimmed sunlight, knocking at doors, peering into the churchyard, meeting in the shroud of sea-fog, a shroud typifying their blindness.

The tale proceeds objectively in a simple, monotonous rhythm, somewhat tiresome in repetitions and homely commonplaces, plodding along persistently, recording retrospection and action, then suddenly piling tragedy on tragedy in almost unconvincing haste.

Railroad gates are broken. Father and son quarrel. A train shrieks. A ghost walks in the churchyard. Open graves are filled. The destroyed home is avenged; the illegitimate son in power with a festering secret in his heart. It would be melodrama were it not for the restraint of the method.

The book provokes impatience, disbelief, until it is put down. Then, surprisingly, you realize that you have added to your experience the spell of the Scaur, the knowledge of its simple, heavy people in bondage to the world of mountain and graveyard. The author might have given us a deeper portrayal of these people. Nevertheless, in her achievement of steady, mounting gloom, she has created an atmosphere and a picture of strange power.

NINA PURDY

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BIOGRAPHY

JAMES FORD RHODES: AMERICAN HISTORIAN *by M. A. DeWolfe Howe* (APPLETON. $3.50)

AMONG our greater American historians, Rhodes occupies a peculiar position. He was not a past master of style, like Parkman or Motley, and there is no such atmosphere of literary classicism about his work as about theirs. He was uneven and, in the last analysis, his reputation rests upon the first five volumes of his *History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850 to 1896,* the remaining four (from 1866 onward) being distinctly inferior. Even these five volumes are hardly definitive as Henry Adams's history is definitive. There is growing evidence that the material will be resurveyed by students who distrust Rhodes's conclusions, and the recent life of Lincoln by Beveridge shows that on some points views radically different from his may obtain acceptance. Yet his title to high eminence as a historian is unquestioned and, though certain short passages may be set aside, his great panorama of American history from the Compromise of 1850 to the impeachment of Andrew Johnson seems certain of a permanent place. The most tremendous and thrilling crisis of our national history found in him a chronicler of sure judgment, of vivid sympathies, of inexhaustible energy in research, of remarkable fairness and of philosophic grasp.

Historians of the right kind are born rather than made, and beyond doubt Rhodes was born to his calling. Everything seemed against his election to such a vocation. Brought up in Cleveland, in circles that touched Mark Hanna, his brother-in-law, on the one side and John D. Rockefeller on another; thrown into the coal and iron business; cut off from intellectual associates or incentives; lacking, so far as anyone knew, any gift for writing—what should impel him toward history? For one factor, as this book shows, was an interest in public affairs. His father was an active Democrat, a kinsman and admirer of Stephen A. Douglas, a partner with the war-Governor of Ohio; the boy met Douglas and talked with Andrew Johnson in the White House. For another factor, a taste for historical literature formed in New York University, where he fell under the influence of Buckle and Draper. It was while reading Hildreth's History in 1877 that he laid down the book and asked why he should not turn to writing. For a third factor, a feeling by 1885 that he had made money enough and would find more pleasure in pursuing learning and fame than in building larger iron mills. He came to history at well-ripened maturity, a man of the world, with all the time and money he needed.

This biography is primarily a record of Rhodes's intellectual and social contacts from 1892, when the first volume of his history appeared, till his death early in 1927. Little is told us of his historical methods, which he himself described in several essays; no attempt is made to appraise his historical work. The scores of letters are linked with suave and concise comment. Rhodes made many distinguished friends—Roosevelt, Lodge, Trevelyan, Bryce, Charles Francis Adams, Barrett Wendell, A. Lawrence Lowell and others. He kept these friendships bright partly by personal contacts, living in Boston and travelling widely, and partly by a prolific stream of epistles. The letters show the same qualities as the history, adding to shrewdness, worldly wisdom and fairness some notable elements of humor and modesty. They are

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not brilliant and indicate little poetic insight or imagination, but they are entertaining and agreeable. They confirm, in short, the estimate of Rhodes as a man not profound or subtle, but wise, mellow and highly capable. Sometimes the wisdom falters. We read with surprise that Rhodes believed in 1916 that Japan was only waiting a favorable opportunity to seize California, Oregon and Washington, and that in 1919 he supported the ideas of Lodge as against those of Wilson. But sometimes he is very wise, indeed, and in his comments on Roosevelt's appetite for the presidency in 1912, Hughes's blundering campaign in 1916, the European war and the Prohibition Amendment he hits the nail on the head. Notable throughout these letters and a marked element in his historical equipment, was his democratic faith in the plain people of the United States.

Mr. Howe is so able a biographer that one hesitates to express a wish that he had put a little more of Mr. Rhodes's own quality of thoroughness into this book; that he had told us just what problems and perplexities he met in writing his history, pried into his workshop, estimated his failures and successes and condescended to cover such topics as the monetary return from his work. But if all of Rhodes and his life is not here, there is enough of him to give us an engaging impression of a scholar and a gentleman, a man at once good-hearted and great-hearted, who wrote the most famous and useful work of American history in his generation.

ALLAN NEVINS

STENDHAL *by Paul Hazard* (COWARD-MC CANN. $3.00)

PROFESSOR HAZARD'S life of Stendhal (Marie Henri Beyle) is a conventional biography of the Maurois type. Beyle's life is a tempting subject for this sort of treatment. The creator of Julien Sorel, who is a Nietzschean hero come a half-century before Nietzsche's time, was himself a man of frustrations and timidities. He had planned a life which was to be characterized by energetic, purposeful action and ruthless domination over his fellows. But the high-water mark of his conquest of society turned out to be a minor diplomatic post at Civitavecchia, grudgingly thrown to him by an unappreciative government; and his one great victory in a long and rather ignominious series of love affairs (a victory he commemorated by an inscription on his suspenders) was gained largely because the genial Maria Pietragrura became a little impatient with her lover's backwardness and in a kindly Italian way took the matter into her own hands. "All your vigor of character," he once said of himself, "comes down to intensity of emotion. You have always mistaken your strong passions for strong will. . . You are lord of any number of castles in Spain, but a helpless slave in the world of reality."

The failure of Beyle's own life was one reason for his success as a novelist. Julien Sorel was the embodiment of what he wished himself to be. All that Beyle had striven for and missed in his own life he brought to fulfillment in *Le Rouge et le noir*. There the intensity of emotion he felt in himself passed into vigorous action, and a strong will effectively carried out the demands of strong passions. But the method by which Beyle realized in literature this projection of an egotism that was thwarted in life is what constitutes his importance as a novelist. Unlike most of his contemporaries, he accepted a finite, non-supernaturalistic world without any heartburnings or nostalgia for lost paradises. For him the heavens were empty and the outlet for human ambition was in the realm of purely human activity. But the first requisite for success in this realm depended on a "clear-eyed knowledge" of what lay behind human activity, that is, on an analysis of human emotion and a psychological investigation of the human heart. Thus Stendhal was the originator of the *roman psychologique* which was destined to an enormous literary influence.

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Professor Hazard devotes only a short chapter to *Le Rouge et le noir* and he says nothing about *La Chartreuse de Parme*—but that is according to the rules of the kind of biography he is writing. For the rest, he is as witty and ironical as the *genre* demands. But I feel that by its insistence on a simple, obvious point of view this type of biography is, in its way, as mechanical and fallacious as the old "Life and Letters".

HOWARD N. DOUGHTY, JR.

THE INTIMATE JOURNAL OF GEORGE SAND *edited and translated by Marie Jenney Howe* (JOHN DAY. $3.50)

WHEN George Sand died in 1876 she left three documents which her family withheld from publication for more than fifty years. The first of these, in point of interest, was the *Journal to Alfred de Musset,* a series of passionate, self-revelatory letters apparently intended for his reading, but never, so long as their love affair lasted, submitted to him. The second is a group of imaginary conversations with "the learned Dr. Piffoël", who represented for purposes of argument the masculine aspect of her own dual nature, with which the feminine aspect was sometimes painfully at war. The third is a scrap book which she lovingly collected over a period of years under the English title, *Sketches and Hints.* This last is composed of intimate anecdotes, odd, fragmentary meditations, confessions and self-analyses, and, most moving of all, the page of recapitulation which George appended in her sixty-fifth year—literally her last word. These papers, released in France upon the authority of George Sand's granddaughter, are here for the first time offered to English readers.

The last two collections fall under the general classification of source material, and, as such, are chiefly of interest to the student. Imaginary conversations, once overworked as a literary form, have no longer much attraction for the general reader. These of George Sand and her kindred and opposed spirit, Dr. Piffoël, are no exception. They are diffuse and not very striking dialogues concerned with the raising of children, the vanity of human life, the search for God, and the more obscure psychological relations between men and women.

The *Journal to Musset,* on the other hand, should be of extraordinary interest to nearly all readers, because the letters which compose it are vividly alive. It is true that they contain nothing likely to alter fundamentally our previous notion of that extraordinary love affair. They serve, however, enormously to elaborate, to illuminate, to punctuate its progress. "To anyone who observes my life superficially," George Sand once wrote to a friend, "I must seem either a fool or a hypocrite. But whoever looks below the surface must see me as I really am—very impressionable, carried away by my love of beauty, hungry for truth, faulty in judgment, often absurd, and always sincere." The total effect of this document could not be better phrased. It is an honest and passionate human record, the uncalculated expression of a great woman deeply in love. Mrs. Howe has given it a lucid and sympathetic translation.

MARGARET WALLACE

THE LETTERS OF THE TSAR TO THE TSARITSA, 1914-1917 *edited, with notes and an index, by C. E. Vulliamy* (DODD, MEAD. $6.00)

HERE are, for the first time in English, the letters which the Tsar Nicholas II, autocrat of all the Russias, sent to the Tsarina during the Great War. The letters were originally written in English; the present volume is a retranslation into English from the Russian taken from the official edition of the Romanov Correspondence, and is made by A. L. Hynes. The whole volume is a ridiculous and infinitely tragic tombstone. The tragedy of the Tsar and his family is nothing compared

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with the tragedy of a people whose luck it was to be ruled by a sentimental, stupid, weak and colossally incapable tin soldier. These pages are almost unbearable. But they are a document of considerable importance. They explain many things, chiefly by omission, and they give us the unconscious self-portrait of a man whose position placed him at the head of a nation of one hundred and fifty millions during a great war, but whose abilities and outlook were something less than one might expect of a retired lieutenant of dragoons.

The Tsar was deeply moved by Little Boy Blue, and in the four years covered by this correspondence we find him devouring, with tears and admiration, four separate novels by Florence Barclay. ("I had to resort to my handkerchief several times. . . . I find them so pretty and true!") This tells more about him than almost anything else in the book.

He was, during these four terrible years, living in two worlds, the small, warm, simple world of family affections and anxieties and the tumult of a gigantic and gigantically mismanaged war. In the first world we find Nicholas a good father, a loving husband, a decent, if limited human being. In the second he was a puppet without knowledge or imagination, naïvely bending over "enormous maps covered with blue and red lines, numbers, dates, and such like", forever reviewing troops who seemed to him to have a "wonderfully healthy, cheerful appearance", travelling on inspection tours where he sees "wounded officers and men from the front", which he can record as a "magnificent day". Hundreds of thousands of these men are flung to death, but the Tsar, who perhaps was never informed of the disasters and at any rate never understood them with his heart, can write that he feels a "truly paschal peace", that he feels "that something good will happen in the war", and expresses himself completely by complaining. ("What a nuisance it is to be always so busy and not to have an opportunity for sitting quietly together and having a talk.")

One of his greatest thrills—and along with the moments of depression or confusion there were glorious moments in the war for him—was a thanksgiving ceremony followed by an officers' luncheon. "We lunched in two high halls—170 men altogether. When we rose, I spoke with every officer, which took an hour and a half. . . . At the end, I promoted them all, each to his next rank. The effect was tremendous."

This same man, with his childlike pleasure in reviews, his ordering of 37,000 ikons for the front, his surprise at learning that four hundred trains a day were necessary for the victualling of the troops, his complete lack of discrimination about the abilities of his generals and ministers, one fine day appointed himself commander-in-chief. The avoider of responsibility suddenly placed the whole load on his own shoulders. When the revolution forcibly took the load off him, he was strangely cold and unmoved.

It is impossible to read these pages without something like sickness.

ROBERT LITTELL

DAISY, PRINCESS OF PLESS *by Herself* (DUTTON. $5.00)

ALTHOUGH she could never forgive Germany for not being England, Daisy Cornwallis-West, who firmly believed that the daughter of any well-born English gentleman was a perfectly good match for any German prince, thoroughly enjoyed becoming a "royalty" and dividing her time between the Hohenzollerns of Germany and her family in England. She was married the first year she came out, because her lovely mother was "too much accustomed to homage and admiration to want them (children) clinging to her skirts". She made no bones about not loving the handsome and engaging Prince Hans Heinrich; but, he told her hopefully, that would come after marriage. And she made no bones about disapproving of nearly everything in Germany that was different from England; but

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many Germans liked her very well. There is ample testimony to her beauty and high spirits; and if in addition she was as natural, as honest, as impulsive, as affectionate, as full of zest, as charmingly vain and as naïvely egoistic as these pages, I think it would have been quite difficult not to like her. Her book is written with the extraordinary candor that seems possible only to the supposedly reserved English, and it is a mine of conscious and unconscious information about one of the most charming and carefree societies that ever danced on the top of a volcano. I find it as unfailingly interesting as Pepys, and it goes at once into my permanent library.

LETTERS OF THE EMPRESS FREDERICK *edited by Sir Frederick Ponsonby* (MACMILLAN. $8.50)

THESE letters, covering the period between 1858 and 1900, are of great importance to the historian, and no one writing on international politics will in future be able to neglect them. The tragic human conflict they reveal makes them quite as interesting to the lay reader.

Victoria, the eldest daughter of Queen Victoria, who on January 25, 1858, married Prince Frederick William of Prussia, was the favorite pupil of her father, the accomplished and erudite Albert, the Prince Consort, and had received daily judicious lessons in the art of governing. After her marriage to the heir of the German throne two obstacles stood in the way of her practising her lessons: two old men and the Prussian belief that woman should content herself with *"Küche, Kinderstube, Krankenstube und Kirche—und sonst nichts"*. The first old man was the insane king; the second was the Regent, young Victoria's father-in-law, who lived to be a nonagenarian. This William, the first Emperor, was sympathetic with the anti-English, anti-democratic party and made Bismarck his chief minister. The Crown Princess and her husband boldly expressed their opposition to Bismarck's blood-and-iron policy, his duplicity and his ignoring of the German parliament and constitution, reiterating firmly those dicta of the good Albert which he in turn had learned from Baron Stockmar. For this Bismarck made them pay dearly. They lived surrounded by spies, intrigues and persecution, both covert and overt, which eventually bred in Victoria the feeling that she was persecuted, which may have been responsible for her fatal error in Frederick's illness. It is an ironical element of the long duel between the liberalism of the Emperor and Empress Frederick and Bismarck's autocracy that greatly as Frederick loathed war and longed to be able to inaugurate his own just and humane policies, his loyalty to his country forced him to enter the various wars precipitated by Bismarck, and did much to build up the greater Germany of the chauvinists.

The letters published here wholly disprove the various complaints, notably those in Ludwig's *Kaiser Wilhelm II,* that Victoria was disloyal to Germany and that she was an unloving, despotic mother to her eldest son. The crucial matter of Frederick's illness is revealed as a strange tragedy. When his throat first gave trouble, his son, the future Kaiser, was already of age—a militarist and adherent of the Bismarck party, and more sympathetic with his grandfather the Emperor than was the Crown Prince, who was being repeatedly snubbed in his son's favor. When the German doctors pronounced Frederick's throat to be cancerous, the Bismarck party immediately declared that a man with an incurable disease must be set aside in his son's favor. The charge against the Empress was that to prevent the thwarting of her lifelong expectancy to be Empress, she refused to believe the disease was cancer, and called in an obscure English doctor to bear her out. If she did this she may have been responsible for the hastening of her husband's death and for his horrible sufferings.

These papers seem to show that Bismarck concurred in calling in Mackenzie, and that

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the Crown Princess was actuated throughout only by her undoubted love for her husband. And yet, whether consciously or not, Frederick's desire to rule, and hers, must have greatly influenced her beliefs and decisions. Otherwise it is difficult to understand how a woman of her intelligence could have gone on praising so highly the doctor whose diagnosis had proved too late to be fatally incorrect, and refusing to use the doctors who had proved to be correct.

These letters show her to have been intelligent, kind, loving, impulsive, emotional. And time has shown that it would perhaps have been better for Germany if she and her peace-loving husband had been able to rule longer than the ninety tragic days vouchsafed them.

ALICE BEAL PARSONS

GEORGE BORROW *by Samuel Milton Elam* (KNOPF. $3.00)

BORROW is no doubt the most puzzling, amusing, fascinating, exasperating novelist in English letters. His personality, problematic enough by nature, he rendered still more mysterious by intention. But Mr. Elam thinks that he has found the heart of Borrow's mystery. It is this: that Borrow was a house divided against itself. He went the Apostle Paul one better. Instead of feeling two strong men struggling within him, he felt three; and they never declared a truce as long as he lived.

He described himself, in the subtitle of *Lavengro,* as "the Scholar—the Gypsy—the Priest", and Mr. Elam feels that his unhappy life was the result of an incomplete fulfillment of any one of his three ambitions, to be a linguist, a vagabond, and a churchman.

To my view, as a lifelong Borrovian, the only trouble with the theory is that I cannot look upon Borrow as an unhappy man. Stiff-necked, pig-headed, conceited he no doubt was, and perhaps a little touched at times in his wits—for he seems to have suffered from delusions of persecution; but that he had, as Mr. Elam says, hardly a decade and a half of happiness in eight decades of life is not at all the impression that his books convey to me. I know of few books that dwell in the mind with so much of "the glory and the freshness of a dream". Surely Borrow's average of happiness, as this world goes, was high.

Mr. Elam's narrative of Don Jorge's life is rapid and manly, written with gusto, and giving a coherent portrait, but he seems to miss—as most of Borrow's critics have missed—the fact that *Lavengro-Romany Rye* is not autobiography at all, except in the sense that the *Opium Eater* or *Moby Dick* is autobiography; that is to say, it is the account of a man's dream-life, though, like dreams, it has its roots in actuality. In the preface to *Lavengro,* Borrow says: "In the following pages I have endeavored to describe a DREAM"; and in *Romany Rye:* "The writer never said *Lavengro* was an autobiography; never authorized any person to say it was one".

But Mr. Elam will have it that when, for example, Lavengro says he spent his evenings by the camp-fire with Isopel in a purely Platonic study of Armenian, he "lied", because, bluntly, since George "was a man", Isopel must have been his mistress. I must protest. Perhaps her original in real life was, but who cares? To assume, however, that she is his mistress in the novel but that Lavengro suppresses the fact is simply to destroy one of the inimitable love-episodes in fiction. To assume that Lavengro is prevaricating here and to read into the affair a carnal motif is to miss all the humor of an incident which is only the most striking of many that make the book unique. No critic seems as yet to have pointed out that Borrow is one of the greatest masters of humor—unconscious humor, which makes it all the richer.

ROBERT M. GAY

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ESSAYS AND CRITICISM

THE MODERN TEMPER *by Joseph Wood Krutch* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $2.50)

MR. KRUTCH modestly offers his monograph as the description of a mood generated in himself by the intellectual convictions current in his own day, "laying stress on those aspects of it which seem closely related to similar aspects of similar moods" revealed in the writings of his contemporaries. With the personal attribution of his work, no one will be disposed to quarrel. Moreover, his constant reference to current thought justifies his title as an account of the premises of the modern syllogism with reference to the value of living. Whether the attempts to avoid the logical conclusion, attempts which Mr. Krutch courteously combats, do not themselves constitute an important element in the modern temper (one which, by insisting on a wider middle term than exact knowledge at present authorizes, refuses to regard the syllogism as complete) is the ground on which his critics will join issue with him. But they will not deny that he has written a book which is a masterpiece of clear thinking and interesting presentation—a book which, with regard to its intellectual quality, makes one exclaim with Milton's Second Brother in *Comus:* "How charming is divine philosophy".

Mr. Krutch's thesis is that the universe as we know it affords no home for the human spirit as it has conceived itself in the past, that is, as possessed of conscious activities which are of importance and significance in themselves; and that "our life of sensations, emotions, desires, and aspirations takes place in a universe of illusions which science can attenuate and destroy, but which it is powerless to enrich". The Nineteenth Century saw the submergence of faith in a supernatural, personal God, of whom man was the child. The implications of this belief, however, lived on after the faith had died; and, accordingly, "both our practical morality and our emotional lives are adjusted to a world which no longer exists"; but today neither the fact of the disappearance of this world nor the consequences can be concealed. The exit of God was felt as a spiritual calamity and voiced with all the eloquence of the later Victorians, not only by Matthew Arnold and the poets, but by scientists such as W. K. Clifford.

But God was only the first to go in a general *exeunt omnes* of spiritual values. In the light of the study of origins, what we call morality does not exist. Love was a sacred thing to troubadours and Victorians, as shown by the taboos with which they surrounded it; the disappearance of those taboos testifies to the loss of the spiritual glory of sexual experience, which as a biological fact is merely "ridiculous and disgusting". Exit romance. Tragedy depends on a sense of the greatness of man, his ability to rise above all the evils of his lot. Today, Oswald Alving in *Ghosts* has replaced Hamlet. The attempt to rehabilitate life as an art of living, Mr. Krutch sees as futile because of the anarchical nature of the artist. "Nature would wipe out animals who dared to try to exist upon principles so completely antithetical to those necessary for animal survival." In short, the faith of man, not only in God but in the universe, has proved false and the only escape for a mind which would preserve what it values most seems to be in dissociating itself from the natural world, in denying its continuity with nature and involving itself in a scepticism which, as Sir Leslie Stephen pointed

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out to Cardinal Newman, is the most destructive of all forms of unfaith.

Mr. Krutch is not the first to perceive this dilemma. It is implicit in Schopenhauer's opposition between the will and the reason. Thomas Hardy has pictured man without a home in the universe, whose God can only explain:

> Sense sealed I wrought, without a guess
> That I evolved a consciousness
> To ask for reasons why.

Mr. W. H. Mallock wrote a book called *Is Life Worth Living?* to point out to Huxley and other scientists that their optimistic faith in "the happy match between the mind of man and the nature of things" was unjustified, and that the values of living are bound up with faith in the supernatural. There is no doubt, however, that the evidence against a rationalistic justification of human values has accumulated so rapidly in late years as to give Mr. Krutch's book a new and vigorous appeal. Nevertheless, it does not seem that the human spirit is as much troubled today by the sense of being an alien in a hostile universe as it was in the first days of disillusionment in the last century. The modern temper seems to be growing more robust. The question, Is Life Worth Living?, asked so anxiously by Mr. Mallock and others, has been waived by Samuel Butler with his curt, "A question for an embryo, not for a man". The Pragmatists have at least taught us that man does not live by taking thought, but because it is part of his animal nature to be alive.

Mr. Krutch shows himself of this persuasion in his final pages and is content to accept life on the Pragmatist's terms. Only as consciousness proves increasingly hostile to animal faith, he looks to see the race continue to die at the top, while more vigorous strains, stronger in survival values and unhampered by spiritual needs, rush in to renew the labor of Sisyphus, which is civilization. Mr. Krutch looks with stoicism on this result. "Ours is a lost cause and there is no place for us in the natural universe, but we are not, for all that, sorry to be human. We would rather die as men than live as animals." It is, however, permitted to ask whether, after all, the very completeness with which science has cleared the ground of illusion does not constitute a difference between the present and past ages; whether the ethical process, which Huxley saw as replacing the cosmic process, may not gain survival value; whether consciousness, accidental product of natural evolution as it may be, will not define a new realm of spiritual values gathering about the very problem which fills Mr. Krutch with despair, that of making a home in a universe which is not so much hostile as indifferent.

ROBERT MORSS LOVETT

A BOOKMAN'S DAYBOOK *by Burton Rascoe.* (LIVERIGHT. $3.00)

WHAT is the phrase today—"Let's go places and do things"? Burton Rascoe, a few years ago, was fond of going places and seeing people. Oddly enough, since he had sat himself down to write about books and writers, he immediately got up again, put on his hat and went forth to wherever the writers foregathered. I write a column of book-notes myself. I depend too much on clip-sheets. Burton depended on his eyes and ears, and he must have done a remarkable amount of reading in between. And how he got time to do it—!

I didn't think it could be done. I mean, I didn't think a book could be assembled from all that Burton Rascoe wrote in the *Herald-Tribune* that would preserve the freshness between boards that *A Bookman's Daybook* does preserve. It treats of much past history. But there are few able diarists in America. Rascoe turns out to be one who can be culled from and preserved with the hope of some permanence. He had the ear for the illuminating anecdote. We have all cavilled at him in the past for inexactitude in reporting. But whose memory is letter-perfect? He gave, and

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gives in this book, the color of personalities and a rich variety of characteristics of the typewriter addicts of his age. Over and above that is his profound curiosity concerning how those who wrote works of great talent "got that way". He is always, as was once Charles Lamb, wishing to examine the gentleman's head.

When he picked winners he picked winners; which isn't, after all, so easy as it may seem. He knew the worth of many authors before the fanfare began. And a thing that one likes about the man in this book of his is his human independence. He was frank and honest about his predilections and his prejudices. He observed everybody from his own particular corner, and he was the only one in it.

He was careless. I can't believe my eyes when I see him referring to what he considers "that greatest of all poems" as Shakespeare's "The Phoenix and the Tortoise." Of course, it happens to be the Turtle. And that happens to mean the Turtledove. And the last line of the Threnos happens to read, "For these dead birds sigh a prayer". And the last verse of the poem prior to the Threnos happens to remark:

> Whereupon it made this threne
> To the phoenix *and the dove,*
> Co-supremes and stars of love,
> As chorus to their tragic scene.

And if you think it was a tortoise, how the devil could you think it was "the greatest of all poems"?

But that kind of thing happens to all journalists. "There but for the grace of God go I."

I should not say that Burton Rascoe was anywhere near being a scholar. Nor do I believe him to be the critic that C. Hartley Grattan believes him to be. But his running comment on American writing and writers of his time is one of the best things of its kind that have ever appeared in a newspaper. Look the others over who are doing it now—and then go back to this book. It isn't merely that there is no stereotype in it; there is intelligence, there is intimacy of the mind, there is vitality and high spirits—even when he girds at one whom I consider the star among comrades, Christopher Morley.

Chorus girls twitching Georg Brandes's goatee and calling him "Grandpop", Vincent Starrett's opinion of W. C. Morrow's *The Ape, the Idiot and Other People,* (a book you ought to read), Edwin Arlington Robinson in a flash at the Playboy Ball, the singularly independent opinions of Scott Fitzgerald and William Lyon Phelps, Will Cuppy frying eels, Lardner's second son reading a boy scout story—that is the sort of thing you get, and you get it in profusion. The above is a mere indication.

It takes me back so. But it is all still going on. Only, we have lost our diarist. He has turned to other matters. And that's our loss. Because no gossiper of books and the makers of books has so far been able to touch him at his best. And who cares whether all the *i's* are dotted and the *t's* crossed so long as he made such good stories out of his experiences. "This, or very like it, was the way." The "very like it" is enough, when it's so entertaining.

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

THE RE-DISCOVERY OF AMERICA *by Waldo Frank* (SCRIBNER'S. $3.00)

MR. FRANK belongs to the excellent company of those who live by faith. To the clever satirists and purveyors of American disgusts this creative study in social integration no doubt will seem a bit preposterous. It is shrewdly alert and realistic, informed with an honest sincerity of thought, yet it comes to final issue on a note of mysticism. Mr. Frank is no flabby or cynical defeatist. He accepts the open facts of America—the machine, the herd-democracy, the jungle of individualism—but he accepts them as things to master and subdue to rational ends, rather than to sneer at or evade. If America is a herd, it is a herd "longing to

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become a true society", and to inquire how it may integrate its life and rid it of the blight of "Americanism" is the theme of the present volume.

That blight, Mr. Frank asserts quite truly, is not solely a product of the new world—as Europe somewhat cavalierly assumes—but a heritage of the old. Historically America is only completing Europe, carrying to its necessary conclusion the disintegrating individualism that issued from the decay of medieval civilization. The golden Twelfth Century was an embodied spiritual whole. To Pope Gregory VII, Europe in a very real sense was the Body of Christ. But from the break-up of medievalism issued another Europe with ideals that conducted straight to chaos and the unbridled will to power. The intellect was subordinated to will; contemplation gave place to action; with the decay of faith science became God and from science came the machine—"an anarchic mindless master" that trammels us and rules us. Americanism then —the "ultimate of dissolution"—is the inevitable final stage of the decay of Europe, slowly working itself free from the hierarchical wholeness of Pope Gregory's world—the "individual anarchic man, moving alone in a herd through a bewilderment of motions", and pronouncing that to be progress which is only the "momentum of present ways". With the decay of faith property remained and in the jungle of today it is King and Bishop and God.

The problem of America—and of Europe as well—is the problem of how to achieve in the midst of the jungle an intellectual and spiritual reintegration—to learn to live once more in the whole. The answer that Mr. Frank returns to the problem may perhaps be called mystical behaviorism—the pursuit of a conscious individualism through understanding of one's total powers. The way out is through imagination—the creating an image of self, through service to which one may grow towards wholeness. It is a conception derived from Spinoza's rule, *Actio sub specie æternitatis,* which is given a strikingly modern twist that allies metaphysics with psychology —the image of life must be conceived of as "holy and whole" in so far as "behavior is whole".

It is a stiff prescription that Mr. Frank offers. He demands much of our poor human nature, perhaps the impossible.

VERNON LOUIS PARRINGTON

MID-CHANNEL. AN AMERICAN CHRONICLE *by Ludwig Lewisohn* (HARPERS. $3.50)

THOSE who watched with suspense Mr. Lewisohn bending to his oars in his earlier progress *Upstream* will be relieved to find him floating on even keel in *Mid-Channel.* It is true, *Mid-Channel* is less exciting than its predecessor; it lacks the strain of conflict. In the midst of his success as journalist, lecturer and critic, Mr. Lewisohn found himself at odds with the blue laws of this country, governing the personal relations of men and women and, in consequence, an expatriate. But there had already come to him "the necessity and wisdom and inner need to re-ally myself with my folk, my ancestors, my tradition"and "the first and unique and irresistible experience of human love". The present volume is based on these two themes. It is an account of travels, of life in Berlin, Vienna, Paris, of meetings with civilized people, of thinking and writing, during which Mr. Lewisohn has come to hold more firmly his belief that creative activity must spring from the depths of racial consciousness. For this, renunciation of the pleasure of living in New York or Florida is a small price. We cannot pity Mr. Lewisohn for his exclusion from a society dominated by organizations he detests like the Anti-Saloon League, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the American Legion and the Ku-Klux Klan. He writes better in Paris.

The chief interest in Mr. Lewisohn's book is in the discussions of artistic and social prob-

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lems for which his narrative is a matrix. And for him society and art are parts of the same whole. "Art is, after all, communication. Art exists for man." He confesses to little interest in the experiments in abstract form of the world of the Montparnasse Quarter. "If it had something to say, a secret in its soul that must by all means be uttered, it would not so wearily play with the mere devices of technique."

Mr. Lewisohn has two things to say of high importance. One message is to the Jew; it concerns the value of his racial inheritance and the folly of the assimilationist in exchanging it for the mess of Christian pottage. Great art must have its roots in a great people. To cut one's self off from such a people for the sake of conquering by superficial cleverness a world in which one remains an alien, is a cardinal error for the Jewish artist. This is the thesis of Mr. Lewisohn's most brilliant and powerful novel, *The Island Within*.

The other message is to the Christian. Mr. Lewisohn points out that what the intellectuals lack—"and lack in proportion to their intelligence and sensitiveness and culture—is precisely a *religio*, a binding of their fate and their activities to some larger whole of life within which it takes on meaning and permanence". Such a religion the Jew has. Such a religion the Christian cannot find in the bastard faith put over on the West by the propagandist zeal of Paul and his organization. That this was not the religion of Christ everyone knows, but "the religion of Christ, since it has not repudiated the so-called civilization of Christendom, is doomed". These are portentous words. Whether we believe Mr. Lewisohn's prophecies or not, we cannot fail to salute him in the rôle to which his experience has led him and which is so fully in harmony with his ancestors and tradition.

ROBERT MORSS LOVETT

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A VARIED SHELF

A PREFACE TO MORALS *by Walter Lippmann* (MACMILLAN. $3.00)

IT is interesting to note in the recent writings of quite dissimilar authors a sort of peremptory tone, the imperative mood displacing the neutral indicative. Mr. Beer caught, and praised, this tone in Lewis Mumford; it exists in the rhapsodic criticism of Waldo Frank; it seemed to me absent in Mr. Krutch's essays as they appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly,* but if there is no imperative in his book, I have a suspicion that it will appear in his next. In a review of T. S. Eliot's *For Lancelot Andrews,* Edmund Wilson says, "The answer to Mr. Eliot's assertion that 'it is doubtful whether civilization can endure without religion' is that *we have got to make it endure*". Mr. Munson, discussing the humanism of Professor Irving Babbitt, looks for an answer, as Mr. Eliot does, to the question of authority. Granted that the exercise of certain virtues (or functions) constitutes the good life, how can we make sure that these virtues will be accepted (without religious sanctions)?

The simple indicative has been rather trickily used in our fiction (Sinclair Lewis, Ernest Hemingway, for examples). This, without glamour, is what life is. What impressed Mr. Beer was that while Eugene O'Neill grovelled before a piece of apparatus, without, I judge, the dignity of Henry Adams's indignation before the same object, Mr. Mumford calmly said, "We *must*" think, feel, and understand, we cannot abdicate. For a decade our "creative artists" have been telling us that abdication is the highest wisdom, merely to observe and to surrender. One felt that their works could be summed up in simple declaratives: life is confused, we are dying, things are terrible. Our modernists, of course; we had stopped listening to the others who went on repeating, "love is all"; we knew they had fallen on their heads when children. There were a few artists who seemed to be saying that this or that corner of the universe was interesting or beautiful. But no one said, "This is desirable, this is to be fought for, this *should* be".

It happens that for fifteen years Walter Lippmann has been concerned with what is desirable. Before the writers of declarative fiction began, he was looking for the way to a life worth thinking about, and before Mumford and Krutch and Wilson and I were intellectually mature enough to wonder whether life was a hoax, he was speculating on its meaning. I do not think he made his speculations effective, then, because he chose a field which most of us decided to ignore—that of politics. It seems to me that he had made a logical progress, and that we have come to him, abandoning our prejudices just when he seems to have understood them. While we were celebrating chaos, he was looking for order, while we dwelt on the tragedy of drift, he had the concept of mastery.

Why Lippmann has not been a leader of his generation is an interesting problem; the answer, I believe, is not discreditable to him. He is not spectacular; the particular kind of passion which animates him is not easily understood. He is cautious. He seems to have had for years the singular notion that Plato and St. Thomas and Spinoza, and governors and presidents and prime ministers, might be studied and, being understood, might give off some illumination. He never was deeply worried by "the younger generation"—and was rewarded by indifference.

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I do not think the indifference will continue. Our imitative novelists (not those I have mentioned) will continue to produce devastating novels, but I fancy the world will not end with them. The recall to order which takes such forms as classicism, catholicism, fascism, or humanism, is being too deeply felt not to influence the present generation of writers. If Lippmann's search for principles and sanctions were unique, it would still be effective, because it is so well done; actually it is part of a decisive movement.

His new book is divided into three parts. The first, "The Dissolution of the Ancestral Order" is defined by its title; it explains why a revaluation is necessary. "The Foundations of Humanism" and "The Genius of Modernity", which follow, are a brilliantly successful synthesis of three principles, one from religion, one from philosophy, one from psychology, and the application of this synthesis to three fields of human activity, business, politics and love. To me the synthesis is more interesting than the application; it is obvious that Lippmann has three more books to write, to expound the final chapters of this one.

The regeneration which religion, nobly conceived, offers, is identified with the disinterestedness of the philosophers—that is easy to follow. The novelty is the next step, the association of these things with the development to a mature and harmonious personality which the psychologists define as the sloughing of infantilism—the progress from our wishes to our knowledge of reality.

I cannot even indicate the range of Lippmann's thought—it is better to say that he is continually concerned with fundamental things and when he speaks of art or contraception or capitalism, they illustrate his general principles. His book is a courageous assertion of the necessity of principles—even of Golden Rules, even of the Golden Rule. I find myself unsatisfied by the hazy discussion of the way the good life can be made the desired life of men and women. The book is not precisely a preface to action. But it is the best description of the life of the spirit, as an enlightened modern understands the spirit, which I have encountered. I should like very much to know what intelligent Catholics think of it—and a few Fundamentalists, if they remain capable of speech after reading this extraordinarily understanding account of themselves.

On the lucidity, judgment and general interest of this book it is, of course, unnecessary to dwell.

GILBERT SELDES

THE HEART OF HAWTHORNE'S JOURNALS *edited by Newton Arvin*

(HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $3.00)

ONE of Hawthorne's notes given in these *Journals* seems, though perhaps a little fancifully, to offer a motto for his life: "The greater picturesqueness and reality of backyards, and everything appertaining to the rear of a house; as compared with the front, which is fitted up for the public eye. There is much to be learnt, always, by getting a glimpse at rears". All his life he was trying to get a glimpse at the spiritual backs of people. His preoccupation was the secrets of personality. Of course he told himself that this preoccupation was dangerous. His notes again and again skirt the idea expressed as a parable in *Ethan Brand* that a scientific interest in sin, divorced from sympathy with the sinner, was itself the Unpardonable Sin.

One has to read the *Journals* carefully to detect his interest in spiritual back-alleys, because, and especially after his early years of obscurity, his memoranda are prevailingly cheerful. He put down so many impressions of the surface of life that his curiosity about its depths is at times hardly perceptible. And so one turns over many pages that might have been written by any other equally observant person before one comes upon things like these: "A ray of sunshine searching for an old blood spot, through a lonely room"; "The print in blood of a naked foot to be

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traced through the street of a town"; "An essay on the various kinds of death, together with the just-before and the just-after"; "A philosopher to buy a slave . . . and to use him for the sake of experiment, by trying the operation of a certain vice on him". And yet in his most innocent notes on persons he is seeking to determine what lies behind the face and what lies in the heart, rather than the head. "If mankind were all intellect," he notes once, "they would be continually changing, so that one age would be entirely unlike another. The great conservative is the heart, which remains the same in all ages; so that commonplaces of a thousand years' standing are as effective as ever." It was these commonplaces that interested him most, as they do all poets and novelists.

As compared with the journals of Emerson and Thoreau, these seem thin until one reflects that they were compiled for an entirely different reason from theirs. Emerson and Thoreau seldom bothered to record externals at all. Their notebooks were, as Emerson said, savings-banks, in which ideas were deposited to draw interest. But Hawthorne's notes are the jottings of a writer of fiction, with such a writer's eye for significant detail. When he puts down ideas, these almost always suggest either character or plot. His journals will therefore be most interesting either to writers or to students of his subtle spirit.

ROBERT M. GAY

THE ROAD TO OREGON *by W. J. Ghent* (LONGMANS, GREEN. $5.00)

FOR the first time a complete chronicle of one of the world's greatest, and, for some reason, most neglected migrations has been presented. Mr. Ghent's account of the breaking of the Oregon Trail which opened for settlement the western territory of the United States is a carefully weighed and documented piece of work. His narrative covers the entire history of the Trail from the eastward expedition of Wilson Price Hunt's Astorians in 1811-12 to the completion of the Union Pacific Railway in 1869. It incorporates much recently discovered material made available by the publications of the Oregon Pioneer Association and the Oregon Historical Society. Many errors and contradictions of the earlier accounts are rectified. Mr. Ghent's story is not without drama of a sort, for the enterprises of the trappers, missionaries, pioneers and homesteaders were essentially dramatic; but the dramatic quality of the material has been carefully subordinated to the need for accuracy. *The Road to Oregon* provides a solid foundation upon which other and more minutely interesting descriptions may be built.

MARGARET WALLACE

WHAT THE NEGRO THINKS *by Robert Russa Moton* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.50)

FROM his desk at Tuskegee, Dr. Moton has been able to look out upon his people and see the reaction of the black man to his white brother's impositions. Gently, Dr. Moton disparages the claims of many white men who boast, "I know the Negro"; he indicates the limitations of the contacts between them and the Negroes they know as far as understanding the entire race is concerned. He has been to some pains to point out how much better the Negro knows the white man, whom he has classified as "quality folks" or "sho' nuff 'ristocrats", at the very top; "half-strainers", in the middle; "crackers" or "sagers" or "rednecks", at the bottom of the bottle.

Like other writers of his race who have treated the question of the Negro's place in American life, Dr. Moton discusses the discrimination against the black man in railroads and other common carriers, in schools, in cities; he dwells upon that popular prejudice which has brought the Negro to believe that he has no chance at the polls or in the courts. He speaks, with pointed briefness, of the rôle of the Negro in the governing bodies of our country.

To all this the Negro has his own reac-

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tions. "In the midst of all this, the Negro thrives. . . . Above it all, his voice rises, singing; and the note of his joy has become the symbol of our modern America." Yet he takes his persecutions most seriously. "Catch him off his guard, and you will find him neither smiling nor singing but thinking and thinking hard." To him, the white man, says Dr. Moton, sometimes seems a bit pathetic in his insistence upon keeping the worth of the Negro hidden, in refusing to "recognize skill and talent, honor and virtue, strength and goodness simply because it wears a black skin". To him, the white man's apparent dread of the Negro is incomprehensible, the more so, perhaps, because there are a few white people who are known and loved for their sympathetic attitude and who "become the shadow of a great rock in a weary land".

The Negro is not looking for "special privileges" but for recognition by public authority of his right to enjoy equal privileges with other American citizens. Dr. Moton believes the outlook for the realization of this hope, for the eventual arrival of such recognition, is growing ever brighter, despite the fact that public authority may be powerless to overcome that prejudice and discrimination which "should be properly regarded as purely private and personal".

If only for the chapters on "Knowing the White Man" and "The Negro's Reaction", the revelation of *What the Negro Thinks* will appeal to many readers.

ROPE AND FAGGOT *by Walter White.* (KNOPF. $3.00)

RARE, indeed, is that lone visitor to the South who has not been involved, by an amiable, native train companion, in the inevitable discussion of the Negro problem below the Potomac. And when the traveller from the North or West has attempted to accord the Negro some measure of human worth, his *vis-à-vis* has asked, with a consciousness of the irrefutability of his question, "What! Would you have your daughter marry a Negro?"

This question has been involved, more often than not, in the justification of that peculiar American custom, lynching. In this biography of "Judge Lynch", Mr. White has gathered together relentless facts to disprove the alleged basis of mob murder in our country and has revealed that Negro-hunting and killing are rooted, not in the southerner's defense of womanhood, but in economics. Paradoxically, it has been the worth of the Negro which has led to his destruction. It has been his success in battling with the soil which has frequently been his undoing, his desire to own his farm which has sent "persons unknown" to seek him out at night. It has been his steady climb toward better things, economically, educationally and socially, which has turned the mob against him with hemp and oil.

It is a severe indictment which Mr. White brings against the South. Although the North and West have not been bloodless, it has been the southern states whose citizens have killed most commonly and most brutally. And within those states, the operation of lynch-law has reached its peak where there is most illiteracy, where there is a preponderance of Methodists and Baptists, where the population is sparse and "backwoods". But the rural southerners, Mr. White points out, have not been solely responsible for the hanging and burning of colored men and women. Mayors of towns, sheriffs of counties, governors of states have been revealed, by confession and camera, as among the onlookers at lynchings. And even when their statements and photographs have appeared in local papers, grinning juries have returned verdicts that Jim Crow has been killed by persons unknown.

In the presentation of his facts, Mr. White has maintained an admirable detachment; his keen interest in the welfare of his race has in no instance obscured his impartial treatment of data.

IRVING ASTRACHAN

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THE BOOKMAN'S MONTHLY SCORE

COMPILED BY FRANK PARKER STOCKBRIDGE, LIFE MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, IN CO-OPERATION WITH THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES OF AMERICA.

Not a single new title in the Score this month, in spite of the number of intriguing new books which have come tumbling from the publishers' mills in the weeks of spring. Library readers don't get their books as quickly as those who buy. At least, the process of determining which books are most popular with borrowers is a slower one than discovering which books are selling best. There is a longer wait while one patron of the circulation department passes the word on to the next that such-and-such a book is worth while. Of the new books of the spring, it can safely be forecast that one title, at least, will pop up in this Score in another month; *Dodsworth* will gain its place on the strength of Mr. Lewis's reputation, if for no other reason. Meanwhile your reporter waits curiously until enough libraries have reported a demand for *The Cradle of the Deep*, before attempting to solve the puzzle which has baffled many of the librarians. At least, in the early reports on this book, about as many class it as fiction as otherwise!

—F. P. S.

FICTION

1. THE BISHOP MURDER CASE	*S. S. Van Dine*	SCRIBNER'S
2. PEDER VICTORIOUS	*O. E. Rölvaag*	HARPERS
3. OLD PYBUS	*Warwick Deeping*	KNOPF
4. SILVER SLIPPERS	*Temple Bailey*	PENN
5. THE CASE OF SERGEANT GRISCHA	*Arnold Zweig*	VIKING
6. MAMBA'S DAUGHTERS	*Du Bose Heyward*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN
7. POINT COUNTER POINT	*Aldous Huxley*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN
8. JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN	*H. W. Freeman*	H. HOLT
9. HARNESS	*A. Hamilton Gibbs*	LITTLE, BROWN
10. SWAN SONG	*John Galsworthy*	SCRIBNER'S
11. ALL KNEELING	*Anne Parrish*	HARPERS
12. SILAS BRADFORD'S BOY	*Joseph C. Lincoln*	APPLETON

GENERAL

1. ELIZABETH AND ESSEX	*Lytton Strachey*	HARCOURT, BRACE
2. STRANGE INTERLUDE	*Eugene O'Neill*	LIVERIGHT
3. THE ART OF THINKING	*Ernest Dimnet*	SIMON & SCHUSTER
4. WHITHER MANKIND?	*Charles A. Beard*	LONGMANS, GREEN
5. RASPUTIN	*René Fülöp-Miller*	VIKING
6. THE MAGIC ISLAND	*William B. Seabrook*	HARCOURT, BRACE
7. MOTHER INDIA	*Katherine Mayo*	HARCOURT, BRACE
8. JOHN BROWN'S BODY	*Stephen Vincent Benét*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN
9. ABRAHAM LINCOLN	*Albert J. Beveridge*	HOUGHTON MIFFLIN
10. THE ROYAL ROAD TO ROMANCE	*Richard Halliburton*	BOBBS-MERRILL
11. GOETHE	*Emil Ludwig*	PUTNAM
12. MY LIFE	*Isadora Duncan*	LIVERIGHT

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BON VOYAGE

Books About London, Old and New

BY ARTHUR BARTLETT MAURICE

CHARLES JAMES FOX, finding his keenest enjoyment in the excitement of the gaming table, used to say that the greatest pleasure after winning was losing and, after that, looking on. Travel, like playing for high stakes, is an adventure involving the element of chance. There are four ways of travelling: prospectively, actually, retrospectively and vicariously. There is a successful American adventurer in travel who has devoted the leisure hours of his life to the study of London. He has never crossed the Atlantic Ocean and has neither the intention nor the desire to do so. But to his well stocked library he adds every new book dealing with his pet subject. On a vast table of special construction he has modelled, according to scale from John Stow's Survey, the London of the last years of the Sixteenth Century. From that model he can live with Shakespeare, following the poet's morning saunterings from his lodgings in Falcon Square, down Noble Street to Cheapside where, at the Mermaid Tavern, he stopped for the bit of bread and the tankard of ale that constituted his breakfast; thence, through winding streets that have long since disappeared down to London Bridge and over the water to the old Globe Theatre.

Many of the books published about London are conducive to that kind of vicarious travel, for in London, old and new, it is hard at times to say just where the old ends and the new begins. In addition to the teeming millions of the present, there are the ghosts of the past, encountered at every turn. The least imaginative of American travellers is sure to find his way to the Cheshire Cheese, there to consume the lark pie and to behold with a pumped-up reverence the "Dr. Johnson chair", despite the fact that there is not one bit of evidence that the pompous Doctor ever visited the establishment. Then, on any fine day in the tourist season before the "Old Curiosity Shop" was demolished in the scheme of modernizing London, there was usually a group of gaping Americans in Portsmouth Street where it was located. That Dickens probably never thought of it in connection with his story was quite immaterial; it looks the part, just as that Johnsonian chair in the Cheshire Cheese looks the part.

Here are three books of old London, Charles Pendrill's *Wanderings in Medieval London* (Macaulay. $4.00); George Byron Gordon's *Rambles in Old London* (Jacobs. $2.50); and Leopold Wagner's *Saunterings in London* (Houghton Mifflin. $4.00). With Mr. Pendrill the reader walks the streets of the City, the heart of the London of the past and the financial district of the present, with the eye of historic vision. "The great gaunt blocks of offices will fade away, and in their place will appear the high-peaked roofs and overhanging gables of the ancient City, and the narrow lanes peopled with the folk of a former age, whose fanciful costumes and quaint customs are in complete harmony with their settings." Mr. Pendrill tells of strange backwaters of the past, such as Queenhithe, where a little square in the City marks the site of a famous port of medieval times; of the once famous river, the Fleet, of which no trace remains, but which was once

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navigable as far as the Holborn Viaduct of the present. The fate of the Fleet may tomorrow be the fate of the Thames, for Mr. Pendrill tells us that a suggestion has actually been made to cover the Thames itself to make a broad highway through London.

For the full flavor of George Byron Gordon's *Rambles in Old London,* take his chapter on London Bridge. Like the New Zealander of the famous passage in Macaulay, Mr. Gordon takes his stand on the old bridge and there muses upon the city and upon the bridge itself. More than anything else, London Bridge has played on the imagination of Britain in all ages, working its way into the nation's legends and folklore. In Celtic folklore it is at least as old as King Arthur. It crops up in medieval legend, in nursery rhyme, in proverb, and in prophecy, coupled with giants, goblins, dream-gold and enchantments. It was in existence before the Romans came. When Canute's ships sailed up the Thames to take part in the siege of London, they were unable to pass the bridge which must, therefore, have been a substantial structure capable of strong defense. The method devised by Canute to overcome the obstacle was to dig a canal, leading from the river below the bridge into Surrey and back into the river above the bridge. Through this canal the Danish fleet passed to the point of attack. England and London in epitome are in that picture of London Bridge.

Old and new mingle in Leopold Wagner's *Saunterings in London.* Tavern signs loom large in the text, suggesting the tipplers of many ages. Before Baker's Chop House in Change Alley, Mr. Wagner recalls the excitements of the South Sea Bubble and those days when Gay, Swift, Arbuthnot and others of that brilliant coterie of the lace and ruffle used to dine well there and be chaired home after—or, as Gay expressed it, "a very full and very comfortable evening, both wit and wine bubbling, and, best of all, no 'head' in the morning". From the taverns and their treasures of historic memories, Mr. Wagner turns to the clubs which in the early days were a development of the old coffee houses and in many cases are still known by the names of their original founders and proprietors. White's, the oldest of the clubs, was first a chocolate house. Later it became the leading Tory Club, in contradistinction to Brook's, which was that of the Whigs. But there was a time at both these clubs when the real object of membership was gaming and eccentric betting. The old betting book of White's, with its astonishing entries, is still shown to guests. Once a man dropped down dead at the door and was carried in; the club immediately made bets as to whether he was dead or only in a fit and, when they were about to bleed him, the betting contingent that had wagered on his death interposed, saying that it would affect the fairness of the bet.

In *Saunterings in London* the ghosts of old bills-of-fare and old dishes that are dear to the British palate are encountered. Some of them are very substantial ghosts and are found reëmbodied in Eileen Hooten-Smith's *The Restaurants of London* (Knopf. $1.50). Introduced with the Johnsonian saying: "No, sir, there is nothing that has yet been contrived by man by which so much happiness has been produced as by a good tavern", the book also conforms to the Johnsonian dictum that "the books that may be held readily in the hand are the best after all". A third Johnsonian note. In her description of the Cheshire Cheese in Wine Office Court, just off Fleet Street, the author accepts the old legend, picturing "the great lexicographer walking nightly to it, first from his house in Gough Square and then from that in Bolt Court". Very likely he did, only no one has ever been able to find the direct evidence.

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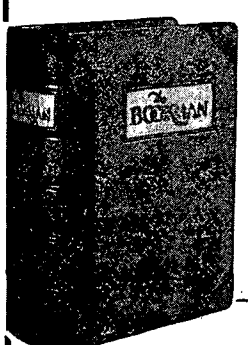

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There is a vast amount of practical information in this little book, ranging from the *haute cuisine* of the Ritz, the Carlton, Claridge's, the Savoy and the Café Royal, to the humble but usually satisfactory imitations of that *cuisine* as found in the establishments of Soho. Prices are more or less standardized. In London's luxury-hotels a luncheon will cost approximately $2 and a dinner twice that sum. In Soho luncheon at sixty cents and dinner at ninety cents are at the disposal of those of an economical turn of mind. A comparatively recent feature of gastronomical London is Sandy's Sandwich Bars. The original Sandy's supplies daily sixty varieties of sandwiches from a menu selection of one hundred and fifty. Most of the sandwiches cost fourpence, fivepence and sixpence for small sizes and double these amounts for large sizes. Sandy's Special Club (cold grilled rump steak with lettuce, tomato and mayonnaise on toast) costs one shilling.

Ever since the days of long ago when young Mr. Kipling in India dreamed of "a juicy steak at Simpson's in the Strand", that establishment has had a particular appeal for American visitors, despite a certain feminine resentment of the old custom that bars the now dominant sex from Simpson's finest room. The pride of Simpson's is its roast saddle of Southdown mutton. Thirty-five or forty saddles are cooked every day. Two other joints that are always on the menu are the roast sirloin of Scotch beef and boiled silverside of beef with carrots and turnips. A room apart on the first floor of Simpson's is the Knights' Room, the club room of the Knights of the Round Table, who meet there once a month to dine at a great table that seats fifteen comfortably. The top of this table is a single piece of mahogany and naturally of huge proportions. Simpson's has been established a mere hundred years, which gives it only a respectable tradition and a flavor of antiquity.

NOTES ON NEW BOOKS—(*Continued*)

up; in this, the second instalment of his self-revelation, he discloses to us the intimate details of university existence in the U. S. S. R.

Fiction

STRANGE MOON *by T. S. Stribling* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.00)

THE author of *Teeftallow* gives us here that rarity, a thriller with humor in it. The plot is as naïve and improbable as a movie fairy tale. An American engineer has been sent to Venezuela to buy the oil lands of an unscrupulous native aristocrat and to begin drilling operations. The fun begins on the first page and never stops. All our old favorites are here—the beautiful dancer, the smooth man-of-the-world lawyer, the surly peon, the two-fisted friend in disguise; even the Marines are called in as gods from the machine. Yet, the whole yarn is spun so graciously, so disarmingly; all these play-actor people are so ingenuous even in their villainy, their brawls, their rages and their love-affairs, and the whole story is bathed in such a light atmosphere of laughing, sometimes ironic, make-believe, that we unhesitatingly pronounce it a good book. That is, good for reading—and what other *summum bonum* do you require of a novel?

MAD FINGERS *by Hildegarde Huntsman* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $2.50)

THIS story strives a little too hard with its unconventionality and its artistic temperaments. Andrew Clayton, typically difficult artist, creates an untidy world about him; Fay, his wife, cannot stand it, but it suits well Marietta Bianca, his model. It is Anna, his daughter, whose life is really disordered by it; Anna, herself unconventional, but with a fine integrity, who can recognize second-rate love and give it up, who can know real love and sacrifice that also. Andrew in the end sees Anna and her needs for the first time, and they can talk understandingly of the things that he says really count—love and work and laughter. This novel will entertain and satisfy those who do not wish to look too deeply, but it remains always a story told, not real life.

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In the July Number of

THE BOOKMAN

LITERARY HERMAPHRODITES by ROBERT HERRICK

Mr. Herrick finds that sex distinctions have become obscured in much contemporary writing: that there are men who write like women and women who write like men. An art in which this confusion flourishes is pronounced in danger of sterility.

We take pleasure in announcing that beginning in the same issue Mr. Herrick will write for THE BOOKMAN a monthly article on fiction. He will pick several of the most important new novels or collections of stories and discuss them at greater than review length. Mr. Herrick's distinction as a novelist, and his years of experience as a college teacher of literature, make him peculiarly suited to the task of interpreting fiction to THE BOOKMAN's readers.

THE PURPLE COW PERIOD by CLAUDE BRAGDON

Reminiscences of America's own "Yellow Book" days by an artist and author who was in the thick of the many activities of that fascinating decade, the 'nineties.

ATHERTON VERSUS GRUNDY by LIONEL STEVENSON

Mr. Stevenson begins his article: "To have written thirty-seven books in forty years, and to have provoked violent controversy by every one of them, serenely weathering the typhoons of abuse which propelled each novel into the harbor of best-sellers—the holder of this record, unique in American literature, is Gertrude Atherton".

RAILROAD LINGO by GROVER JONES

A story in dialect, with an essay on the language of the rails.

THE HISTORY OF THEIR BOOK by ARTHUR BARTLETT MAURICE

VII. Irvin S. Cobb.

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TREADMILL *by Lola Jean Simpson* (MACMILLAN. $2.00)

THE time is more than ripe for some disciple of Sinclair Lewis to give us the low-down on the teaching profession. *Treadmill* is an attempt in this direction. High-spirited and enthusiastic, Leslie Burleson discovers during her first year of teaching in a California high school that she is balked at every turn by the narrowness and stupidity of the board of education, by the cowardice of her associates, by the small-minded prejudices of the community. The school system, she learns, is a machine which crushes those who decline to be standardized. Unfortunately, Miss Simpson diverts one's attention from the main issue by dwelling at length on a rather puerile love story. One never really feels the bitterness of Leslie's predicament because it is so obvious that romance, in the shape of a brilliant young college professor, is waiting round the corner to rescue her from the treadmill.

HER SON *by Margaret Fuller* (MORROW. $2.50)

THE story opens with Laura Wolcott stepping from the gateway of the White House where her son resides as president. This is the fruition of her life's determined dream. The novel goes back to tell the boyhood of Stephen, against a New England background, with a thoughtful, gentle father and a stern, indomitable mother. It is not enough that her son be fine, loyal, true; he must also be ambitious, he must win. At eighteen we leave him, just beginning his own bicycle store; even then his mother has determined he shall be president. "Your mother is an extraordinary woman—a much better manager than your father," says the latter. True, but happily, when Stephen smiles, it is his father's smile. An interesting study of a strikingly strongminded woman, moulding—and overshadowing—her son's life.

SALAD DAYS *by Theodora Benson* (HARPERS. $2.50)

THIS altogether delightful and refreshing book is absurd and quite satisfying. It is so youthfully sophisticated, so youthfully innocent, and Felicity and Viola are as engaging English girls as one can find—Viola, with her several suitors, and Felicity who discovers too late a hopeless love. Walks and dances, gossip and love-making, delicious fooling on quite serious subjects with likable young men—these make up the salad days. How can one take seriously a heroine who earnestly asks: "Do you suppose that all wives have sometimes to sit on their husband's knee?" Or how can one take too lightly one who learns sadly and tenderly and yet happily: "The things that made the days wonderful were never material possessions that you could keep . . . . . just moments of delight that you had very definitely and then forever had not. . . . Safety and permanence were surely only meant for Heaven. Meanwhile, the world was sweet".

THE MOON IS MADE OF GREEN CHEESE *by Sarah Comstock* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.50)

WHEN Kingsbury receives the Fordyce award as the world's greatest astronomer and his renown echoes in every land, his early friend, Brian Shedlock, a bedraggled failure, is operating a dime telescope in Union Square, New York City. Yet it was Shedlock who had shone as the man of promise all through their youthful years. The author rehearses their youth and early manhood, always side by side, but with Kingsbury subordinated to his brilliant friend until the testing moment which decided their divergent ways. Weakness and strength, under strange guises, are discerned, and the honest and the spurious are revealed. It is a story of drama and psychological penetration, based on an excellent idea and potentially powerful.

EASILY PERSUADED *by Elizabeth Deane* (LIVERIGHT. $2.00)

Easily Persuaded seems a bit of a misnomer; Doris needed no persuading to follow the primrose path. In an artless style this artful lady's life history is told up to the early twenties, through two marriages and many affairs. It impresses one as being rather overwhelmingly in the first person, though it is not; the heroine is so intently looking out for what will bring her "happiness", forever hoping that each new love will be the true love, and so dauntlessly willing to keep on. Although Doris is an actress, at twenty-three, deeply—but quite temporarily—disillusioned, she

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decides it is to the writing of a novel that she will devote herself; for this she sets sail to the manless city of Paris.

THE FLAGRANT YEARS *by Samuel Hopkins Adams* (LIVERIGHT. $2.00)

IN the hypnotic atmosphere of a beauty salon patrons unburden themselves of their troubles and, incidentally, of a good deal of gossip. Consuelo Barrett, an operator in one of these salons, finds herself involved in a sensational murder and several complicated love affairs. The author, whose political novel *Revelry,* aroused so much interest, is here equally successful in catching the spirit of the beauty market. It is an excellent story of adventure written in a humorous vein.

WINGS OF WAX *by Janet Hoyt* (SEARS. $2.50)

THERE have been many novels dealing with flaming youth and college life; but, under the *nom-de-plume* of Janet Hoyt, a former dean of women at a state university here shows us the other side of the story, the faculty's point of view. A young scientist of great personal charm is appointed president of a large Middle-Western university and, with all the confidence in the world, attempts to administer the affairs of the college in opposition to the advice of his more experienced colleagues. The struggles of this singularly spoilt and self-willed man, who proved not big enough for the job, do not inspire sympathy because he is so childishly stubborn; and one wonders where he ever got courage enough for the step which ends the story.

THE LASLETT AFFAIR *by A Gentleman with a Duster* (MACAULAY. $2.00)

THROUGH his college years Stephen Laslett, brilliant, erratic son of a new rich middle-class English family, was steadied by the sane influence of two friends, Hugh Jodrell and Susan Anstey; but with his first success in politics and his intimacy with a popular writer of sex plays, he begins to coarsen and grow over-confident. After his father's failure and suicide, Stephen turns to free-lance journalism and rushes headlong to destruction. Far from the facetiousness and superficiality suggested by the author's pseudonym, the spirit of the book is somewhat like Wassermann's *The World's Illusion.*

THE MERRY HEART *by Frank Swinnerton* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.50)

MR. SWINNERTON'S first novel just recently published in America, is melodrama in the grand old style—villains, a beautiful stenographer with an invalid sister, a feminist, an earl in disguise and a praiseworthy hero. The philosophizings of its chief character, Locritus of "the merry heart", very likely reflect the uncertainties of the youthful author himself; and the characterization of this muddled, young, would-be cynic shows the deft touch of Mr. Swinnerton's later work.

MINSTRELS IN SATIN *by Elisabeth Cobb Chapman,* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.50)

HER children call her Fanny when she's good, Fan when she's bad. Fanny Marvel, careless, selfish, rootless; Penelope, whose life is subordinated to her sister, the talented singer, Camilla, and sophisticated George—these characters are real individuals. They flit about against the colorful Italian background, for the stability and restraint of the relatives in America have no part in Fanny's character, and only one child in real sincerity is drawn toward honest endeavor. This sparkling novel shows observation and insight as well as humor, and skilful analysis of character. The plot works itself out through the inevitable development of these lives, in their interests and their lesser and greater loves. One feels in the whole work maturity and considerable richness.

THE KEY TO THE CASA *by Keck Orbison* (WASHBURN. $2.00)

AN adventure story of the Far East with glimpses of Oriental impassivity behind which lurks danger when Chinese smuggling plans are frustrated. Working his theme up to an intense climax, the author has succeeded in achieving a drama of human forces.

A GREAT MAN *by Walter Vogdes* (LONGMANS, GREEN. $2.00)

A STORY of the gold rush days of '49 and of a hero bound to succeed and to lead. Three char-

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acters stand out against the real and glowing, yet almost incredible background of those days when boots were a hundred dollars a pair, newspapers two dollars apiece and gold was swept out of the saloons into the street: David Frazer, who goes out to make his fortune as a miner and finds himself, instead, the shrewd trader, the forceful business man of the quickly rising city; his one friend, so strong a contrast to him, Dr. Darnley Lewis, who had no ambition to lead; and passionate Emily, loving both men and loved by both. The writing has simplicity and vigor, and the story, vivid and direct, is told with an understanding of the essential differences in character.

THE ENCHANTING DANGER *by Vera Wheatley* (DUTTON. $2.50)

THIS is the story of four young people who are the victims perhaps of propinquity and perhaps of isolation in a remote English village "where every prospect pleases and only man is vile". The danger, of course, lies in human love, which in this case takes the rather distracting form of a triangle within a quadrangle. The vilest angle of this human geometrical pattern is a sweet lady who, in attaining the best man for her purposes, robs her cousin, by a trick, of a potentially happy marriage. The husband makes love later to the cousin who for his sake rejects the enduring devotion of his friend. The end is death—not worse. The book has a pre-war flavor that is pleasant, and Freud's existence is unknown to the protagonists. Now and again—and perhaps this is to Miss Wheatley's credit—one wishes that the May Sinclair of *The Three Sisters* was on the job.

UNKNOWN LANDS *by Vicente Blasco Ibañez* (DUTTON. $2.50)

TRADITION paints Columbus as a far seeing, brilliant scientist and voyager who proved to an astounded Court that the world was round, and who by his own skill and courage reached the New World. But as the hero of this novel Ibañez preferred to depict him as a rather dull, stubborn man, who tried to prove to skilled navigators, who had always known the world to be round and India to be seven thousand miles or more across the seas, that by sailing twenty-five

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912

Of THE BOOKMAN, published monthly at Camden, New Jersey, for April 1, 1929

State of New York
County of New York } ss.

Before me, a notary public, in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Seward Collins, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the president of the Bookman Publishing Company, Incorporated, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 411, Postal Laws and Regulations, to wit:

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Editor, Seward Collins, 386 Fourth Avenue, New York City;

Managing Editor, Dorothea Brande, 386 Fourth Avenue, New York City;

Business Manager, F. A. Skelton, 386 Fourth Avenue, New York City.

2. That the owner is: The Bookman Publishing Company, Incorporated, 386 Fourth Avenue, New York City; Seward Collins, 386 Fourth Avenue, New York City.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

(Signed) SEWARD COLLINS,
Publisher.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 27th day of March, 1929. WILLIAM A. GERSBACH.

Notary Public.

[SEAL]

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hundred miles West he could come to Asia. A nobler figure is made of Sir Martin Alonso, experienced commander of the *Pinta* who died "like a true child of the sea, clinging with his last gasp to the tiller of his caravel, but holding her head to the storm and reaching the point he set out to reach". This last novel of the popular Spanish author, finished just before his death, is primarily a richly-detailed story of adventure and discovery.

Detective Fiction

ONLY SEVEN WERE HANGED *by Stuart Martin* (HARPERS. $2.00)

WHILE the setting of this story is wild and improbable, the theme is novel. The scene is laid in the meeting-room of the Clue Club; a learned judge is chairman and, as he calls the meeting to order, his companions drop off to sleep under the influence of drugs. Only the judge and the waiter are left. The latter, an escaped convict, plays a game with the judge in which he argues that the state has no right to execute a murderer. Picking cases that the judge has tried, he wins his game by proving that the wrong men were put to death. It is not intended as a brief against capital punishment, but it does show up the miscarriage of the law. It winds up most appropriately.

CRIMES OF VIOLENCE AND REVENGE *by H. Ashton-Wolfe* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $2.50)

DRAWN from actual cases in which the author who was connected with Scotland Yard and associated with the famous Bertillon, participated, these crimes of violence and revenge prove far more interesting than the clever plots devised by detective story writers. In each instance, the foundation of the crime is the desire to avenge a wrong and shows that the perpetrator, while he often pays the death penalty, is more often than not a victim of circumstances over which he has little control.

THE CLUE OF THE CLOT *by Charles Barry* (DUTTON. $2.00)

A WELL constructed story of intrigue dealing with usury, murder and an international group of procurers, in which the murderer escapes arrest at the last moment.

MURDER BY THE CLOCK *by Rufus King* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.00)

MURDERED at seven o'clock, Herbert Endicott is brought to life again by midnight, only to be murdered again at one. Jealousy and subtle cunning play an important part in this unusual mystery story.

THE PALGRAVE MUMMY *by F. M. Pettee* (PAYSON & CLARKE. $2.00)

SCIENTIST Paris Palgrave receives from Egypt the mummy of little Princess Amon-Ya and invites a group of fellow-scientists to be present at the opening of the wooden jacket. The first evening ends with a robbery and a murder and, from then on, the story moves rapidly to a startling climax.

THE BLACK PIGEON *by Anne Austin* (GREENBERG. $2.00)

THIS mystery story is unique both as to plot and execution. Ruth Lester, secretary to "Handsome Harry" Borden, unscrupulous promoter and man about town, finds her employer dead on the floor beside his desk on Monday morning. Suspicion points to several people who would gladly have murdered him, among whom, besides herself, is her fiancé, Jack Hayward. Her father, famous criminal lawyer, who was killed while conducting an investigation, had trained her mind to pick out the essential facts of criminal cases, and it is by this faculty that she is able to find the murderer.

DEATH ON SCURVY STREET *by Ben Ames Williams* (DUTTON. $2.00)

THE story of a young newspaper reporter, a police inspector and the murder of a mysterious man. Mr. Williams has turned out an exceptionally clever and well constructed plot.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE XXX)

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THE BOOK MART

Of the book auction season of 1928–9, there remains one outstanding memory—the Kern sale. The dispersal of the Hoe library in 1911–12 is the only auction sale in this country with which it can be compared. The total of the Hoe sales was $1,932,056, and of the Kern sales $1,729,462. But the Hoe library comprised 14,588 lots, nearly ten times as many as in the Kern sale —1,482. Consequently the average price per lot in the Hoe sale was about $132, and in the Kern sale more than $1,165. Undoubtedly these prices were not paid by the honest but poor booklover. That the auction sale marked the end of an era and the beginning of a new one is evidenced by some of the English dealers' catalogues issued since, in which they contrast their own low prices with those of the Kern sale. The records given in the English and American Book Prices Current mean nothing. It is not unreasonable to expect that another fifteen years may elapse before we see another sale in this country like the outstanding one of last season. There were other sales, by no means unimportant in an ordinary season. There was the Norman James sale at the opening of the season, in which natural history and sporting books to the value of nearly $100,000 were sold; there were the William W. Cohen and the James W. Paullin sales of Americana which would have been notable in any season; and there were the Hatton and other sales of modern first editions in which the prices showed an appreciation similar to that of items in the Kern sale. On the whole, the auction houses have reason to be satisfied with the business done last season, although they are now confronted with the problem of getting enough rare books to make up the season's sales next year. Even now the English field is being looked over for what it may yield for the New York sales of 1929–30.

Autograph sales of the past season continued to hold the interest of collectors, and in many cases new records were made for choice items. The George W. Childs sale in Philadelphia, early in the season brought into the market some remarkable items, a page and a half of the manuscript of the *Pickwick Papers,* in Dickens's handwriting and signed both "Boz" and "Charles Dickens" bringing $9,000; the original autograph manuscript of Maurice Hewlett's *Forest Lovers* went for $4,000; a Franklin letter for $4,500 and a Lincoln autograph letter of three pages, signed, brought the record price of $11,700. The season ended up with the sale of the only known document signed by Thomas Lynch, Jr., the Signer of the Declaration whose autograph in any form is the rarest of all the Signers. Between these sales were a number in which the outstanding items were historical documents or letters, great in interest and high in price.

For the coming months the book mart is in the hands of the dealers, although considerably less than might be expected of the auction season's purchases remain in the hands of dealers. One of the liberal buyers at the Kern sale, whose purchases amounted to more than $100,000, had practically none of it left two weeks after the sale, much of it having been bought upon order. A few of the Kern books have reappeared in auction sales, but few of them have figured in the catalogues of dealers issued since that event. In fact, the rarest and most desirable of books do not often get into the dealers' catalogues unless as a matter of record, to be marked "Sold", for the reason that when a dealer acquires an uncut copy of the first edition of *Gray's Elegy,* for example, he knows of three or four collectors, at least, who would

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The Walden Book Shop
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like the copy, and the transfer is made from the dealer to the collector without publicity. George Bernard Shaw, who affects surprise that collectors should pay high prices for his writings and his autographs, was having fun at somebody's expense when he pointed out that "Shaw's annotated copy of Locke's famous Essay" (on Human Understanding) was one which belonged to Horace Townsend, Mrs. Shaw's father, whose handwriting is very similar to Shaw's. He wrote to the London *Observer* explaining that he had never read Locke's famous essay and never disfigured books by underlining them, and makes an appeal to his worshippers "not to scramble too blindly for alleged Shaviana". Of the annotated Locke which brought $1,500 he says: ". . . the £300 treasure is worth about threepence in the book market, although intrinsically it is worth as much as, if not more than, a commentary by myself". Probably Shaw collectors will be more careful in the future, although the scramble for Shaw first editions and autographs shows no signs of abatement.

At last we are to have a bibliography of the writings of Christopher Morley, and collectors of Morley first editions would do well to pick up what they can before the publication of this book gives a renewed impetus to the Morley boom. The publication of a bibliography of any author immediately starts activity in collecting, with a result which is saddening to the collector of limited means. The forthcoming work has been compiled by Dr. Alfred P. Lee of 235 South Fifteenth Street, Philadelphia, who has been working on it for several years, though one wonders how he has managed to keep up with Mr. Morley's literary activity, and especially how he has kept track of those impor-

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THE BOOK MART

tant but ephemeral items which are not advertised for sale. Dr. Lee, however, goes further and is attempting a census of Morley manuscripts. He begs that anyone possessing a Morley manuscript of any sort will immediately communicate with him at the address given. In the interest of completeness THE BOOKMAN seconds the motion.

One of the noticeable features of the collecting of modern first editions is that the prices on the best-known works of favorite writers of today are becoming standardized. Looking through the book catalogues in general one finds that about the same prices are asked by all the dealers for first editions of Cabell's *Jurgen,* Dreiser's *Sister Carrie,* Milne's *When We Were Very Young,* Newton's *The Amenities of Book-Collecting,* O'Neill's *Strange Interlude,* Morley's *The Haunted Book Shop*—to mention a few at random. When it comes to Hardy, Kipling, Stevenson, Mark Twain, Shaw and others, the differences are wider. In the case of the authors first mentioned such differences as exist are very largely due to the varying condition of copies. In the second group the prices vary as widely in the auction room as in the dealers' catalogues. This standardization of values is an aid to the collector, for once a price is set for a book the main thing to be considered is its condition. Of course there are bargains to be picked up occasionally, even in the auction room. A first edition of Scott's *Vision of Don Roderick,* in pristine condition, was purchased by some lucky buyer for five dollars. But there is no warrant for extreme fancy prices for works of modern authors which were issued in considerable editions and of which there must be still hundreds of copies in private hands, forgotten by their owners.

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NOTES ON NEW BOOKS—(*Continued*)

THE STOKE SILVER CASE *by Lynn Brock* (HARPERS. $2.00)

In her search for relaxation Sarah Virginia Langley tours the byways of England in her caravan for two. She drives straight into murder at Stoke Silver, getting into no end of trouble; but with her clever intuition she hits not only on the answer to the mystery but finds romance as well.

THE SCARLET THUMB *by Jermyn March* (HENKLE. $2.00)

As a youth handsome Juan Karslake had sown one wild oat too many. Consequently when he returned to England as master of Danesthorpe Hall he carefully guarded the secret of his past life from lovely Clover Willoughby, his fiancée. His cousin inadvertently stumbles on the mystery almost shattering Juan's romance. The story is brought to an abrupt climax with an unusual twist that should make it popular.

MYSTERIES OF HISTORY *by C. J. S. Thompson* (LIPPINCOTT. $4.00)

From time immemorial each century has produced some rogue whose tricks were a great source of wonder, and Mr. Thompson has here gathered together some of the most famous and interesting cases of knavery. Among them are the peregrinations of Cagliostro, Nero and Locusta; Charles II and the "Royal Touch"; and the "Celestial Bed" of James Graham.

TRIUMPHS OF DETECTION *by George Dilnot* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $5.00)

The author of this book has unearthed from the police archives of the world several outstanding international cases that were solved by the keen minds of Scotland Yard, the Paris Sûreté, and other police divisions. Each case is carefully reconstructed as to crime and exact method of solution. Included is the organizing of the Flying Squad, the introduction of finger-prints in crime detection and the story of Thomas Neill Cream, the "mad murderer".

Reprints and Anthologies

Drama

Great English Plays *edited by H. F. Rubinstein* (Harpers. $3.50). Historical sequence of texts from a Mystery to Oscar Wilde, with lively running commentary.

Readings from British Drama *edited by Allardyce Nicoll* (Crowell. $3.50). Rich selection of typical scenes of plays from the Liturgicals to Maugham, scholarly in treatment, historical in aim. Companion piece to *British Drama,* by the same author.

Harvard Miracle Plays *edited by Donald Fay Robinson* (French. $3.00). Translated and adapted by various hands, with production notes and music.

Eighteenth Century Plays *with introduction by John Hampden* (Dutton, Everyman's Library. $.80). Cato, Jane Shore, The Beggar's Opera, Tom Thumb the Great, George Barnwell, The Clandestine Marriage, The West Indian.

Civic Repertory Plays *with introduction by Eva Le Gallienne* (Norton. $3.50). Hedda Gabler, La Locandiera, Wied's 2 x 2 = 5, and Chekhov's Three Sisters, as they are played at the famous 14th Street Theatre, for the establishment of which Miss Le Gallienne received the Pictorial Review Award.

Carolina Folk Plays, Third Series *with preface by Frederick H. Koch, founder and director of the Carolina Playmakers* (Henry Holt. $2.50). Producible pieces from a college group. Paul Green began his career in this same class.

Types of World Tragedy,
Types of Philosophic Drama,
edited by Robert Metcalf Smith, professor of English at Lehigh (Prentice-Hall. $1.65 each). Great plays arranged for the study of man through his manner of thought. Sophocles to Gorki, and Job to Andreyev.

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